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# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**U.S. DEMOCRATIZATION STRATEGY:  
ORIGINS AND OBSTACLES**

by

Chad G. Wahlin

September 2008

Thesis Co-Advisors:

David S. Yost  
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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>		<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> September 2008	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE:</b> U.S. Democratization Strategy: Origins and Obstacles			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> LCDR Chad G. Wahlin, USN				
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b>	
<b>13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)</b> The George W. Bush administration offered two rationales for the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. First and foremost, the invasion would eliminate the threat that the Iraqi regime headed by Saddam Hussein might transfer weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to terrorist organizations. Second, the invasion would depose the brutal dictatorship in Baghdad and deliver the oppressed people of Iraq from tyranny. After the invasion, in the absence of any Iraqi WMD stockpiles, only one of these original justifications for war remained viable. As a result, the Bush administration realigned U.S. national security strategy and set forth a vision of peace and security through the democratization of the Middle East and the world. This thesis examines the historical antecedents of this vision. It also analyzes the transition in the Bush administration's foreign policy from a position of pragmatic restraint and America-first principles to a Wilsonian vision of global pacification through the spread of democratic principles of governance. Finally, the thesis reviews the various obstacles that could prevent the fulfillment of this vision, which has met with significant resistance in Afghanistan as well as Iraq.				
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Democratization, Wilsonianism, Immanuel Kant, Bush Strategy			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 115	
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>	
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UU	

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**U.S. DEMOCRATIZATION STRATEGY:  
ORIGINS AND OBSTACLES**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(EUROPE, EURASIA)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The George W. Bush administration offered two rationales for the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. First and foremost, the invasion would eliminate the threat that the Iraqi regime headed by Saddam Hussein might transfer weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to terrorist organizations. Second, the invasion would depose the brutal dictatorship in Baghdad and deliver the oppressed people of Iraq from tyranny. After the invasion, in the absence of any Iraqi WMD stockpiles, only one of these original justifications for war remained viable. As a result, the Bush administration realigned U.S. national security strategy and set forth a vision of peace and security through the democratization of the Middle East and the world. This thesis examines the historical antecedents of this vision. It also analyzes the transition in the Bush administration's foreign policy from a position of pragmatic restraint and America-first principles to a Wilsonian vision of global pacification through the spread of democratic principles of governance. Finally, the thesis reviews the various obstacles that could prevent the fulfillment of this vision, which has met with significant resistance in Afghanistan as well as Iraq.



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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The author would like to acknowledge Professor David S. Yost for his tireless support of this work.

The author would also like to thank his parents whose limitless love and support have been the foundation for his every success.

This work is dedicated to his wife, an astonishingly beautiful woman in every possible way.

And to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mediatrix of all God's graces, of which he has received far more than anyone could possibly imagine.



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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. PURPOSE**

This thesis analyzes the current U.S. strategy of promoting peace through the establishment of democratic rule in countries throughout the world. The overall objective is to assess the extent to which the goal of world-wide democratization is a realistic and workable foundation for a national strategy. To this end, the thesis reviews the intellectual origins of the goal and discusses the recurrence of this vision in U.S. national strategy since the nation's founding. It then considers the apparent root causes behind the eventual dominance of this idealistic vision in the national strategy of the George W. Bush administration. Lastly, it examines the soundness of the strategic supposition of democratic peace, reviewing not only the cogency of democratic peace theory but also the potential effects of instituting democratic procedures – such as competitive elections and universal suffrage – in areas of post-conflict reconstruction as well as in regions burdened with deep religious and sectarian divisions, such as the Middle East. The thesis identifies apparent obstacles which could hinder the success of the current strategy and which must be taken into account in the definition and implementation of a U.S. foreign policy which reflects American values but, more importantly, is both politically solvent and ultimately in the nation's best interest.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

The importance of this topic is evident in light of the unexpected resistance the United States has faced in its attempts to promote the establishment of liberal and free democratic societies in Afghanistan and Iraq. Rather than the anticipated popular embrace of Western-style freedoms, the liberation effort has been met with an aggressive insurgency and domestic strife. The fundamental premises of the Kantian and Wilsonian vision of peace through democracy deserve critical analysis in light of these facts. Furthermore, accepting that the Kantian and Wilsonian vision may have merit as a long-term goal, it is important to determine the potential obstacles to the successful

achievement of this objective. The thesis considers the extent to which the problems America faces in Iraq are merely interim resistance to change or symptoms of the inherent shortcomings of what might be considered “gun-point Wilsonianism.”

## **C. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Historical Antecedents**

The vision of achieving peace through the organization of a world of democracies is not new. Its origins can be found over two hundred years ago, and the key ideas have been repeated throughout history by U.S. leaders as contemporary and revered as Ronald Reagan.<sup>1</sup> In his seminal work on the subject entitled *Perpetual Peace*, Immanuel Kant argued that lasting peace between states requires the acceptance of three “definitive articles.” The first of these articles deals directly with the essential nature of individual state governance in a peaceful world: “The Civil Constitution of Every State Should Be Republican.”<sup>2</sup> He argued that only republican governments have the capacity to tame the aggressive warring tendencies of despotic regimes. A nation’s populace, he argued, recognizes clearly the disproportionately injurious nature of war for the governed and thus seeks all measures to avoid it. Clearly, as history shows, liberal regimes have not been immune to warlike behavior, yet these actions have been for the most part directed at non-liberal regimes whose intentions cannot be trusted. Thus, the United States has had a series of leaders who, whether to rid the world of the devastation of war or simply through ideological convictions about the proper form of governance, have pursued the Kantian ideal through a policy that Michael Doyle has called “liberal internationalism.”<sup>3</sup> It is clearly this policy that the George W. Bush administration has adopted as its principal justification for continued U.S. action in Iraq and the greater Middle East.

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald Reagan, 1983/1984. “Peace and National Security,” televised address to the nation, Washington D.C., 23 March 1983, p. 40 in the U.S. State Department, *Realism, Strength, Negotiation*, May 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1957), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Michael W. Doyle, “Liberal Internationalism: Peace, War and Democracy,” [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/articles/doyle/index.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/articles/doyle/index.html) (accessed 17 February 2008).

The history of democratization ideals in the United States begins with one of America's most respected Founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson, who expressed his earnest hope that the march of democracy would continue coming "to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all."<sup>4</sup> Other advocates of this idealistic vision have been heard throughout American history. Perhaps the best known of these advocates remains Woodrow Wilson, who entreated Americans to support the nation's involvement in the First World War not only for realist reasons, such as retaliation and alliance support, but also because, he argued, "The world must be made safe for democracy."<sup>5</sup> Then, in the wake of the devastation of war, he championed the cause of the League of Nations, which would, he hoped, be composed of democratic states, dedicated to preserving a lasting peace.

However, despite numerous voices in support of the advancement of freedom around the world, many American leaders have warned of the potential dangers of international involvement. While *Realpolitik* has often dictated the necessity of American engagement abroad, a global crusade for democratic political change in the name of peace would have been regarded as diplomatic insanity by many leaders in U.S. history. Beginning with George Washington, such opposition is unmistakable. Indeed, in his farewell address, the Father of the Nation asked, "Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice?"<sup>6</sup>

## **2. Current U.S. Strategy**

In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union the United States found it difficult to develop a new, long term strategy commensurate with the emerging international

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Roger C. Weightman," 24 June 1826, *The Essential Thomas Jefferson*, ed. by John Gabriel Hunt (New Jersey: Portland House, 1994), p. 333.

<sup>5</sup> Woodrow Wilson, Address to a Joint Session of Congress on 2 April 1917, available at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4943/> (accessed 8 July 2008).

<sup>6</sup> President George Washington's farewell address, 17 September 1796 <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/washing.htm>, p. 12, (accessed on 17 May 2008).

circumstances. Clearly, the promotion, widening and sustainment of peace were among America's objectives. However, the route to peace has never been unanimously agreed.

According to the great British historian Martin Wight, the three main traditions of thinking about international relations in Western societies can be described as Realism, Rationalism, and Revolutionism. Wight also described the Realist approach as Machiavellian, the Rationalist approach as Grotian, and the Revolutionist approach as Kantian. Realists emphasize the anarchical aspects of international politics: "sovereign states acknowledging no political superior, whose relationships are ultimately regulated by warfare." Rationalists concentrate on "diplomacy and commerce" and other means of promoting "continuous and organized intercourse between these sovereign states." Revolutionists stress the "concept of a society of states, or family of nations" and pursue the achievement of enduring international peace.<sup>7</sup>

In the history of U.S. foreign relations, some of the ideas of policy-makers such as John Quincy Adams, Theodore Roosevelt and Sumner Welles can be seen as falling within the Realist tradition, while many of the concepts endorsed by Washington and Lincoln can be seen as consistent with the Rationalist tradition. The Revolutionist tradition has been distinctive in emphasizing a requirement of ideological uniformity among states as the means to establish international peace, and the statesman in U.S. history most closely identified with this Kantian approach is Woodrow Wilson.

It would, however, be an error to assume that the thinking of specific policy-makers has always fallen under the heading of a single tradition. Wight repeatedly pointed out that "the three traditions are not clear-cut pigeon-holes, but can overlap."<sup>8</sup> His work was, he wrote, "an attempt to pin down and define the *central* principles and *characteristic* doctrines of each of the three traditions."<sup>9</sup> While Wight discerned essential differences among the three traditions, he also declared that

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, edited by Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter (London: Leicester University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991), pp. 7-8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 258; italics in the original.

...all this is merely classification and schematizing. In all political and historical studies the purpose of building pigeon-holes is to reassure oneself that the raw material does *not* fit into them. Classification becomes valuable, in humane studies, only at the point where it breaks down. The greatest political writers in international theory almost all straddle the frontiers dividing two of the traditions, and most of these writers transcend their own systems.<sup>10</sup>

While historically U.S. foreign policy has been informed by both Realist (Machiavellian) and Rationalist (Grotian) perspectives, some U.S. policy makers have also clearly professed support for a Revolutionist or Kantian/Wilsonian vision of peace through democratization. Though the United States has not always had the strength or influence necessary to lead a global democratization movement, it has nevertheless often championed nations seeking liberty and self-determination. In his inaugural address in 2001, President Bush made it clear that this Kantian and Wilsonian vision would remain a tenet of American foreign policy. He described America's "faith in freedom and democracy" as "a seed upon the wind, taking root in many nations."<sup>11</sup> However, his first inaugural speech was otherwise largely devoted to domestic promises. While America, he said, would stand and "speak for the values that gave our nation birth,"<sup>12</sup> such pronouncements were apparently not to be regarded as ultimatums to despotic regimes but instead suggestive urgings in the framework of a "balance of power which favors freedom." Indeed, it seemed that President Bush believed that the nation's security would be assured through the realist notion of "defenses beyond challenge."<sup>13</sup>

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, however, seemed to drastically reduce the chance that the administration would continue to patiently wait for this "seed upon the wind" to take root and bear fruit, particularly in areas such as the Middle East where militant anti-American sentiment fueled distrust and hatred for all involvement with Western societies and their liberal ideologies. The attack on America ushered in a

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<sup>10</sup> Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, p. 259; italics in the original.

<sup>11</sup> Inaugural Address, President George W. Bush, 20 January 2001, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/inaugural-address.html> (accessed on 6 February 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

demand for retribution by the American people but also slowly fostered an elevated urgency within the administration to more actively seek the realization of America's long-held Kantian/Wilsonian vision. What had not been accomplished through the market and diplomacy was now ostensibly to be achieved through force. Indeed the tone of the September 2002 National Security Strategy was clearly different from that of the 2001 inaugural address. In his cover letter to the National Security Strategy President Bush promised that America "would actively work to bring the hope of democracy...to every corner of the globe."<sup>14</sup>

The march of freedom seemed poised to commence and, by every reasonable estimate, it was growing clearer that this would be a "forced march" led by the United States. However, support for the goal of creating a world of democracies did not guarantee effective action or a long-term popular commitment, particularly if that commitment required significant sacrifice. For this reason, the Kantian and Wilsonian ideal of global peace via democratization had to be linked to the pragmatic realism of national defense. The clearest pronouncement of this link came in the President's second inaugural address. The President noted that "the survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands."<sup>15</sup>

After the swift and seemingly decisive defeat of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in late 2001, the Bush administration set about to implement the first in what it hoped would be a series of democratic transitions throughout the Middle East. The apparently easy realization of this first step in Afghanistan struck a note of optimism that fulfillment of the vision was possible. Thus, a turn towards Iraq seemed the almost inevitable next step in liberty's conquest. Again, the American people were provided both *Realpolitik* and altruistic justifications for an invasion of Iraq. While the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq had to be eliminated, President Bush said, the United States also had a moral obligation to "free the Iraqi people" who had been

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<sup>14</sup> President's cover letter, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>, p.1 (accessed on 6 February 2008).

<sup>15</sup> The Second Inaugural Address, President George W. Bush, 20 January 2005 available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050120-1.html>, p.1 (accessed 6 February 2008).

“enslaved” by the Baathist regime.<sup>16</sup> As expected, the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime was swift, but so also was the collapse of one of the two pillars of America’s justification for organizing a coalition to intervene in Iraq. The alleged WMD were not found, and thus the sole remaining justification for America’s intervention in Iraq became the altruistic assertion that “25 million Iraqis have as much right to live in freedom as we do.”<sup>17</sup>

Now, however, as America’s involvement in Iraq has continued, with little expectation of a near-term exit, questions have arisen about the overall feasibility of achieving the Kantian/Wilsonian goal. Are the obstacles the United States is facing in Iraq and Afghanistan merely isolated circumstances or rather unavoidable and potentially recurring shortcomings in the democratization strategy? Furthermore, to what extent is the Kantian and Wilsonian vision intrinsically flawed? These questions must be addressed in order to achieve the desired goals of both peace and American security.

#### **D. OBSTACLES**

America’s protracted involvement in Iraq has evoked a flood of contrasting opinions about what should be done. The conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere have highlighted ongoing debates about the validity of democratic peace theory and the potential for lasting peace through democratization. First and foremost, the elusiveness of the definition of a “peace inducing democracy” constitutes the first weakness of the theory. Furthermore, some scholars doubt the practical feasibility of realizing the Kantian and Wilsonian vision. These scholars conclude that democracies often do not interact as expected with either fellow democratic states or non-democratic states. It has been argued that prospects for peace through democratization may be significantly affected by geopolitical circumstances, including the political-military predominance of the United States in a specific region, such as Europe. While democracies may not be inclined to wage war against one another – unless a competition over resources arises –

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<sup>16</sup> President George W. Bush, Justification for Iraq Invasion, March 22, 2003, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030322.html>, p.1 (accessed on 15 March 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Guardian Unlimited Interview, George W. Bush, April 14, 2004, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,1191531,00.html> (accessed 20 May 2008).



the same cannot be said of relations between democratic and non-democratic nations. Erich Weede argues that the forcible establishment of a democracy in a non-democratic “neighborhood” actually increases the risk of war due to the inherent incompatibility between democratic and autocratic regimes.<sup>18</sup> Thus, any causality between liberal governance and peace may be minimal at best, and peace may be more credibly associated with alternative explanations.

Another school of thought, while supporting elements of the Kantian vision, recognizes that essential preconditions must be met to encourage success. Lasting peace may be jeopardized, for example, by the means through which a government’s transition to democracy is accomplished. In a recent paper entitled “Democratic Jihad: Military Intervention and Democracy,” Nils Petter Gleditsch, Lene Siljeholm Christiansen, and Håvard Hegre argue that, while a democratization process established through force might have initial success, it often creates unstable democratic nations with the potential for future difficulties.<sup>19</sup>

A final significant obstacle to the success of U.S. democratization strategy is receiving increasingly greater investigation – that is, analyses of whether it is realistic to regard Western, liberal democratic values as universal, particularly in regions such as the Middle East. Indeed, it is noteworthy that Kant’s optimistic vision in *Perpetual Peace* emerged during one of the fiercest revolutions the European continent has ever seen, a revolution that was largely aimed at overthrowing the continent’s historic religious authority. As the political upheavals in much of Europe were anything but bloodless, it might be naïve to assume that a political transition as fundamental as democratization could successfully occur without significant hostility in theocratic Muslim societies starkly divided along religious, sectarian and cultural lines. In truth, the installation of democracy in such nations can only be achieved by overthrowing the existing political

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<sup>18</sup> Erich Erich, “The Diffusion of Prosperity and Peace through Globalization,” *The Independent Review* (Fall 2004), p. 165-186.

<sup>19</sup> Nils Petter Gleditsch, Christiansen, Lene Siljeholm, and Hegre, Håvard, “Democratic Jihad? Military Intervention and Democracy,” April 2004, <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/uppsala/ws21/Hegre.pdf> (accessed on 28 February 2008).

structure. Simply put, in such cases democratic transition effectively removes the highest religious and political authorities in the society from practical governance and eliminates the traditional source of societal concord, whether voluntary or forced. The resulting polarization in Iraq has thus far had a severely destabilizing effect. Thus, as America seeks to promote such democratic transitions around the globe, it is important to investigate their short and long term effects and to determine whether democratic governance heals or exacerbates societal divisions.

## **E. MAJOR EXAMINATION**

This thesis examines the origins and implications of the current U.S. administration's strategy for democratization. More specifically, the democratization of Iraq seems to have become the altruistic "fallback" justification for the failure to find weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq. While the democratization objective is noble in its intent, its achievement faces tremendous obstacles and may prove considerably more costly in both treasure and blood than the American people are prepared to pay. The ultimate question is the extent to which the administration's Kantian and Wilsonian vision of a world of democracies is a workable foundation for a national strategy.

This thesis investigates the hypothesis that there are inherent limits to the fulfillment of this vision. The obstacles to the forceful promotion of democracy must be kept in mind to avoid recriminations about unfulfilled expectations and, above all, to maximize the chances for success in the cases in which the necessary conditions can be satisfied.

## **F. SOURCES AND THESIS ORGANIZATION**

U.S. and European sources, both primary and secondary, are examined in this investigation. Chapter II reviews the intellectual antecedents of the current strategy. The writings of Immanuel Kant, Thomas Jefferson, and Woodrow Wilson, among others, highlight the historical development of the democratization vision, sometimes called "democratic peace theory." This chapter includes a discussion of the intellectual

opposition to this theory and cites the contrasting ideas of prominent Americans such as George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and John Quincy Adams.

Chapter III identifies key aspects of the strategy of democratization that has been pursued by the George W. Bush administration since 2001. The primary source documents include the 2002 and 2006 editions of the *National Security Strategy of the United States*, and various speeches and other works by the President and other administration officials.

Chapter IV explores the obstacles to the realization of U.S. democratization strategy. Beginning first with the Kantian and Wilsonian vision itself, the thesis discusses the feasibility of achieving the vision and the substantial obstacles facing its realization. The thesis also examines the impediments affecting America's democratization efforts today in the Middle East. These impediments may prove to be lasting obstacles to the fulfillment of the strategy.

Chapter V summarizes the conclusions of the investigation.

## II. INTELLECTUAL ANTECEDENTS

The pursuit of lasting peace is one of the noble undertakings of civilized humanity. As history has shown, however, conflict has arisen often in spite of our greatest efforts. The philosopher Immanuel Kant rightly acknowledged that “[t]he state of peace among men living side by side is not the natural (*status naturalis*); the natural state is one of war.”<sup>20</sup> He went on to argue that only republican governments have the capacity to tame these aggressive warring tendencies. The United States has had a series of leaders who, whether motivated to rid the world of the devastation of war or simply through ideological convictions about the proper form of governance, have pursued this Kantian ideal. The most notable proponent of this ideal was President Woodrow Wilson. This chapter investigates the origins of President Wilson’s Kantian idealism and counterposes selected views of more realist-inspired U.S. leaders such as President John Quincy Adams. It highlights the clear and distinct contrast between the two schools of thought and their opposing views about the potential for a democracy-based peace and America’s obligation to promote that peace.

### A. THE KANTIAN TRADITION AND THE FOUNDING IDEALS OF THE UNITED STATES

Though recognition of the advantages of representative government can be traced back as far as ancient Greece,<sup>21</sup> its potential impact on inter-state peace was first publicly argued in a systematic fashion by Immanuel Kant in 1795 in his seminal work entitled *Perpetual Peace*. In section II of the work, Kant outlined what he proposed as the three “Definitive Articles for Perpetual Peace Among States.” The first (and likely the preeminent) of these articles reflected his belief that a world of constitutional republics might guarantee peace. “The Civil Constitution of Every State,” Kant wrote, “Should Be Republican,”<sup>22</sup> for a world of constitutional republics would, in essence, end all war.

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<sup>20</sup> Kant, *Perpetual Peace*.

<sup>21</sup> J.A.O. Larsen, “The Judgment of Antiquity on Democracy,” *Classical Philology*, vol. 49, no. 1 (January 1954).

<sup>22</sup> Kant, p.11.

Kant's reasoning was straightforward. He argued that, other than for reasons of self-defense, a nation's populace would not rationally choose to endure the hardships of war. Thus, as all constitutional republics would instead adopt a cautious defense posture, no aggressors would exist and, as a result, war would be completely eliminated. Kant wrote,

...if the consent of the citizens is required in order to decide that war should be declared (and in this constitution it cannot but be the case), nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war. Among the latter would be: having to fight, having to pay the costs of war from their own resources, having painfully to repair the devastation war leaves behind, and, to fill up the measure of evils, load themselves with a heavy national debt that would embitter peace itself and that can never be liquidated on account of constant wars in the future.<sup>23</sup>

In essence, according to Kant, representative government would ensure peace by providing effective influence to those most likely to be harshly affected by war.

The attraction of this utopian idea was predictable, particularly in the wake of the European Enlightenment and the emergence of a new principle of legitimacy in government, "the consent of the governed." In fact, plucked from its theoretical confines, this legitimacy principle found its political embodiment in the American Declaration of Independence, which professed the self-evident truth that "*all* men are created equal" (emphasis added). While Christianity held such to be the view of God, a country's avowal of this maxim in the temporal realm implied the formation of a new type of political regime, one that would be (according to Kant's theory) disposed to avoid foreign conflicts. In essence, if Kant's theory was correct, extending this historically unprecedented equality of political status for the individual<sup>24</sup> to other nations would extricate America from the future conflicts inherent in the warring tendencies of autocratically ruled states. Hope in a Kantian-style global peace through liberal

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<sup>23</sup> Kant, pp.12-13.

<sup>24</sup> In 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was published, suffrage was limited to free white men holding a certain amount of property. The ideal expressed in the Declaration helped to extend the suffrage over time to all citizens. Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people [American slaves] are to be free." This quotation is reproduced from Thomas Jefferson's autobiography and is engraved on the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.

pacification was also apparent in the philosophical ideas espoused by many of the most noteworthy founding fathers of the United States. Thomas Jefferson, the ideological wellspring of American liberty, clearly espoused a belief in the redemptive power of democratic rule. Yet the principal author of America's Declaration of Independence also seemed to hold an ambitious wish for the expansion of democratic liberty outside the United States, expressing an earnest hope that the march of democracy would continue coming "to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally, to all."<sup>25</sup> Seemingly even more convinced later in life, in 1821 Jefferson wrote to John Adams, "In short, the flames kindled on the 4th of July, 1776, have spread over too much of the globe to be extinguished by the feeble engines of despotism; on the contrary, they will consume these engines and all who work them."<sup>26</sup> These words reveal what some might regard as a messianic vision of global tranquility through the continued expansion of representative government.

## **B. WOODROW WILSON AND LIBERAL INTERNATIONALISM**

The recognition of the advantages of democracy and the philanthropic wish for the global expansion of its privileges undeniably constitute a noble ideal. However, the most notable expression of "liberal internationalism" in American foreign policy occurred a century later under liberalism's most zealous apostle, President Woodrow Wilson. Desperate to end the bloodbath of a brutal war and determined to protect the world from the senseless carnage which by this time had claimed an entire generation of European young men, President Wilson opened a new chapter in the long-standing American tradition supporting the global expansion of liberalized polity.

For a clear understanding of the significance of this dominating principle in Wilson's foreign policy one must clearly examine his thinking, the source of his conviction, and the ultimate results of its implementation. As Henry Adams said, "Readers might judge for themselves what share the individual possessed in creating or

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<sup>25</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *The Essential Thomas Jefferson*, ed. John Gabriel Hunt (New Jersey: Portland House, 1994), p. 333.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, 1907), p. 334.

shaping the nation; but whether it was small or great, the nation could be understood only by studying the individual.”<sup>27</sup> For “at crucial moments, at turning points, when factors appear more or less equally balanced, chance, individuals and their decisions ... can determine the course of history.”<sup>28</sup>

Victory at the Somme had cost the British 419,654 casualties, the French, nearly 200,000 in exchange for an advance of a mere seven miles.<sup>29</sup> The German casualty figure, though debated, is estimated to have been as high as 680,000.<sup>30</sup> By the end of the First World War total casualties would be staggering. A combined excess of 8.5 million were dead and over 20 million wounded.<sup>31</sup> As incomprehensible as the death toll was, perhaps even more frightful was the grotesque exposure of the wanton depravity of human nature unleashed in the rage of the war and made possible through the technological advancements of the age. Wilfred Owen, a British soldier, wrote a famous poem before he was killed in the trenches. It accurately conveys the depths to which organized humanity was willing to go to fight for the ideological principle of nationalism. The subject of the poem is the horrors of gas warfare and the final lines are perhaps the most potent.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face like a devil's sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,

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<sup>27</sup> Henry Adams, *A History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 406, cited in John Lamberton Harper, *American Visions of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Isaiah Berlin, quoted in Ramin Jahanbegloo, “Philosophy and Life: An Interview,” *New York Review of Books*, 39, no. 10 (May 28, 1992), 51, cited in Harper, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 285.

<sup>30</sup> German casualty estimate available at <http://history.sandiego.edu/GEN/ww1/somme.html> (accessed 8 August 2008).

<sup>31</sup> World War I casualty figures available at [http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath\\_pop.html](http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html) (accessed 8 August 2008).

Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, –

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*  
*Pro patria mori.*<sup>32</sup>

It was against this backdrop that Woodrow Wilson, one of the most influential political figures in the modern age, emerged. Born in 1856, he was both a product and champion of the ideas of the modern world. The third of four children born to a Presbyterian minister, his family had been involved on both sides of burgeoning American political issues. While his grandfather had been the publisher of an abolitionist newspaper in Ohio, his parents' relocation to Virginia in 1851 engendered a familial association with the Confederate cause and subsequent support of slavery. Nevertheless, his sense of moral certainty and compassion for humanity were no doubt the result of his family's close religious affiliation. Indeed, the beginning of his term in office in 1913 was marked by economic and social legislation aimed at helping the "little man" by stifling the "unfair" practices of big corporations. The Clayton Antitrust Act, which held individual officers accountable for corporate violations, and the Federal Farm Loan Act, extending low-interest, long-term loans to farmers, are two significant pieces of legislation characteristic of his early administration.

The President's religious and moral convictions would find, however, no outlet more significant than the foreign policy of his second term. In the waning moments of the age of imperialism, his was a Kantian vision of a new age of geopolitics dominated by peaceful republics eliminating the atrocities of war. True to his Presbyterian religious heritage, he proposed a policy framework for world order that he called a "covenant." His dedication to this strategic vision and his employment of the American military in its

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<sup>32</sup> Wilfred Owen, "*Dulce et Decorum Est*," <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/19389> (accessed 8 August 2008).



pursuit changed the world. Though interrupted by the rise of 20<sup>th</sup> century fascism and communism, his vision might rightly even be seen as having laid the fertile seeds of the modern democratic European community.

The impact and duration of President Woodrow Wilson's political legacy, however, would have likely been different under alternative geopolitical circumstances. As Stanley Weintraub has noted, if the President had been unable to hang his reelection campaign on the assertion that he had "kept us out of war," he would have likely lost to a powerful Republican candidate, the former Governor of New York, Charles Evans Hughes.<sup>33</sup> Yet, the war was destroying Europe and Wilson's non-intervention had won favor with the U.S. electorate, unwilling to partake in what Zara Steiner has aptly described as "one of the most tragic and inhumane periods in European history."<sup>34</sup> It might thus be asserted that President Wilson's true legacy begins at precisely the point where he resisted the country's isolationist tendencies, and chose to "marshal the might of his country to end the carnage of the World War."<sup>35</sup>

On 2 April 1917, an extraordinary session of Congress was called for what would become one of the most famous addresses of a U.S. president in modern times. President Woodrow Wilson, in his second term of office, was asking for a Declaration of War against the Imperial German Government. The request was itself extraordinary as the administration had been previously committed to American non-intervention in Europe.

Yet a closer look at the speech reveals more than simply an action seemingly out of character for the administration. American entry into the war was to lay the foundation for a completely new geopolitical reality. Though loaded with a stern indictment of the Imperial German Government, the most extraordinary aspect of the President's address was his heartfelt conviction in the redemptive power of liberal governance. He maintained that it was imperative that the United States take action to spread democratic ideals for the sake of the world's future. Indeed, though calling for

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<sup>33</sup> Stanley Weintraub, *Silent Night* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), p. 167.

<sup>34</sup> Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History 1919-1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. vi.

<sup>35</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson and World War I* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 2.

retaliation due to the fact that “American ships have been sunk” and “American lives taken,” the President’s most famous statements are completely void of such historical, realist justifications for military action. Instead, the President quickly widened the intent of military commitment and appealed to a broader sense of global altruism. The conflict was not an isolated European event, but a “war against all nations” in which the “challenge is to all mankind.”<sup>36</sup> He asserted America’s gladness to fight for “the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience.” Finally, in what has become perhaps his most famous utterance, President Wilson insisted that “[t]he world must be made safe for democracy.”<sup>37</sup>

What is important to note is that even prior to America’s entry into World War I, one can see the clear and distinct enunciation of the radical change in U.S. justifications for war that Wilson was about to make. Historically, the causes of U.S. mobilization for war were largely issues of territory, retaliation, or authority. It might be argued that less than 20 years earlier, President McKinley’s call for U.S. action against Spain had smacked of altruistic intentions. However, the sheer inaccuracy of his culturally elitist rhetoric suggests that his call to arms was a self-deceptive rationalization that masked geopolitical imperatives. The Filipinos, McKinley argued, were unfit for self-government—and therefore “there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize *and Christianize them*.”<sup>38</sup> This remarkable yet bizarre justification – Margaret Leech called it “the greatest absurdity of the expansionist propaganda” – was provided for the invasion and occupation for half a century of a country which at the time was home to over 6.5 million people, all of whom, through the efforts of the Roman Catholic Church, “were in full enjoyment of the blessings of Christianity.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Woodrow Wilson, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4943/> (accessed 8 August 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> McKinley quoted in Margaret Leech, *In the Days of McKinley* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 345; italics added.

<sup>39</sup> Leech, p. 324.

President Wilson's address, however, marked a complete break with such precedent. Wilson's rhetoric was not the poorly veiled imperialism of McKinley founded on the notion of a U.S. obligation to forcibly civilize peoples regarded as racially, culturally, and religiously backward. Instead, the President's intentions were to forever alter the world political stage through liberal ideology. Indeed, after this point in history, conflict lines became increasingly justified by political ideologies. In 1917, President Wilson justified American involvement in the European conflict as an essential challenge of morally superior democratic governance against inferior and insidious autocratic rule. Throughout the following century, this view of America's mission became the recurrent rationale for the involvement of U.S. troops abroad from Belleau Wood to Normandy to Baghdad.

The German threat notwithstanding, President Wilson's actions in the First World War were clearly born of his religiously inspired faith in a Kantian vision of a new, peaceful order of world politics based upon the cooperative interactions of friendly democracies. However, while the philosophical justification of this ambitious vision seemed sound, the U.S. Senate's rejection of Wilson's proposed League of Nations was the beginning of an ongoing debate on the nation's commitment to this vision and, more so, its willingness to sacrifice for its practical application. The post-war establishment of a peaceful and benign Weimar Republic seemed in 1919 to embody Allied confidence in the potential benefits of liberal governance oriented towards the peaceful settlement of disputes. However, the birth of fascism and Bolshevism had cast long shadows on the previous expectations of perpetual peace. Within two decades after World War II though, empirical evidence slowly emerged which seemed to vindicate Kant's vaunted theories and Wilson's optimistic hopes.

### **C. EMPIRICAL SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY**

In 1961, the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) was established by Act of Congress. Part of the mission of this agency was to conduct research to foster a "better understanding of how the basic structure of lasting peace may

be established.”<sup>40</sup> Three years later, citing the goals set forth for ACDA, criminologist Dean Babst published the first empirical analysis examining whether regime type serves as an accurate indication of the propensity for two countries to make war with each other. Babst considered relations between freely elected, or democratic, governments. Using Quincy Wright’s list of major wars since 1500, Babst conducted a statistical analysis of the outbreak of war between two countries to determine whether any correlation could be found to the countries’ respective modes of governance. Regarding the First World War, Babst found statistical significance in the difference between the conflict potential of differing regime types. That is, elective governments had a lower conflict potential. Similar statistical significance was found to exist in the interactions of regimes in the Second World War. Though no inquiry was made regarding wars from World War II to 1963, Babst concluded that “the existence of independent nations with elective governments greatly increases the chance for the maintenance of peace.” Furthermore, he wrote, “What is important is the form of government, not the national character.”<sup>41</sup>

Babst’s work received significant attention and seemed to further validate the assumptions of the “democratic peace” theory associated with Kant and Wilson. Follow-on studies were conducted by Melvin Small and J. David Singer supporting Babst and confirming, in fact, an absence of war between democratic states. Perhaps, however, the most extensive discussion of the peaceful effects of democratic polity came in a 1983 investigation conducted by Michael Doyle. In his study, entitled “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” Doyle argued that “liberal peace” does exist and cannot be explained away through realist argumentation. He showed a persuasive statistical association linking peace and liberal governance apart from other external variables such as wealth and geography. Through the marginalization of balance of power politics, liberal or democratic governance has a pacifying effect due to three forces manifest in liberal regimes. (1) The citizens of liberal states must bear the burden of war. (2) Liberal republics respect one another. (3) Economic advantage and mutually recognized

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<sup>40</sup> An Act To Establish A United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Public Law 87-297, September 27, 1961.

<sup>41</sup> Dean Babst, “Elective Governments — A Force for Peace,” *The Wisconsin Sociologist*, 3 (1, 1964), pp. 9-14.

“cosmopolitan law” fosters peaceful interaction among liberal states. These conditions, Doyle argued, produce a “liberal zone of peace” harkening back to Kant’s “pacific union.”<sup>42</sup> Doyle conceded, however, that liberalism does not preclude war between liberal and illiberal states. Doyle stated that, “Even though liberal states have become involved in numerous wars with non-liberal states, constitutionally secure liberal states have yet to engage in war with one another.” He concluded that “the peaceful intent and restraint that liberalism does manifest in limited aspects of its foreign affairs announces the possibility of a world peace this side of the grave or of world conquest. It has strengthened the prospects for a world peace established by the steady expansion of a separate peace among liberal societies.”<sup>43</sup> In essence, it would seem that initial statistical evidence has vindicated Kant’s theory, yet global altruism has for many been a weak justification for American sacrifice. Despite the philanthropic intentions of the promoters of liberal internationalism, ardent voices of skepticism and caution have been heard throughout successive epochs of American history.

#### **D. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS AND AMERICAN ISOLATIONISM**

In his 1941 article entitled “The American Century” Henry Luce argued against American efforts to intervene in Europe (and across the globe) for the sake of political ideology. Luce wrote, “Emphatically our only alternative to isolationism is not to undertake to police the whole world nor to impose democratic institutions on all mankind including the Dalai Lama and the good shepherds of Tibet.”<sup>44</sup> Luce’s sentiments were not the sarcastic observations of a dissident tycoon, but instead echoed the caution of many of America’s most favored sons.

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<sup>42</sup> In *Perpetual Peace*, Immanuel Kant described a union of pacific states which would result from the achievement of three conditions: (1) the establishment of states founded upon republican constitutions; (2) the establishment of a “law of nations” which would govern the peaceful interaction between states; and (3) the establishment of norms of world citizenship oriented around “universal hospitality.”

<sup>43</sup> Michael Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer 1983), p. 213.

<sup>44</sup> Henry Luce, “The American Century,” *Life*, February 7, 1941, reprinted in Michael J. Hogan, *The Ambiguous Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 20.

Perhaps the earliest admonition can be seen in the words of the Father of the Nation himself, President George Washington. Washington had risked life, wealth and reputation to command the Continental Army against the British forces. Then, despite significant reluctance, he had served as America's first President, taking the helm through some of the most formative years of the nation's existence on the world stage. In his farewell address at the close of his Presidency, Washington outlined his vision of what he considered the foundation of a prudent foreign policy for the country. "The great rule of conduct for us," he stated, "in regards to foreign nations, is in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible."<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, leaving no room for misunderstanding, he emphatically reminded America that "'Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent Alliances with any portion of the foreign world."<sup>46</sup> His reticence in this respect was emulated by his successor, John Adams. However, it was Adam's son, the future president, John Quincy Adams, who most clearly identified the necessity of an American foreign policy disassociated from ideological interventionism.

It was during his service as Secretary of State that John Quincy Adams uttered his summation of his dedication to American disentanglement. In a Fourth of July Address in 1821, he acknowledged America's global goodwill but expressed a cautious admonition against what Walter McDougall has called "global meliorism."<sup>47</sup> Adams stated:

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<sup>45</sup> Worthington Chauncey Ford, *The Writings of George Washington* (New York City: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1892), p. 316.

<sup>46</sup> George Washington, "Farewell Address," *The Annals of America*, vol. 3, publisher William Benton (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1968), p. 61.

<sup>47</sup> Walter A. McDougall defines global meliorism as the most recent phase of the U.S. relationship to the world. It is characterized by a desire to change other societies into approximate facsimiles of the United States. McDougall argues that this prescription has been most notably proffered through the media elites and can be seen in such American efforts as the intervention in Haiti under Woodrow Wilson, an action which was justified as necessary to secure a people's right to democracy. Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company), p. 172.

Wherever the standard of freedom and Independence, has been or shall be unfurled, there will her [America's] heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. *But she goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own.*<sup>48</sup>

In his book, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, Samuel Bemis noted that “From the beginning John Quincy Adams had thought like Washington on foreign affairs.” In his famous letters of “Marcellus” in 1794, Adams wrote, “It is our duty to remain, the peaceful and silent, though sorrowful spectators of the European scene.”<sup>49</sup> Bemis notes that such “advocacy of Abstention had originally commended him to the serious attention of the first President.”<sup>50</sup> In fact, as early as 1796 Adams had defined what he considered the unique “American System” of polity as distinctly opposed to the “European System.” The difference between the two was as vast as the ocean that separated the continents. He saw the two as “two separate systems” which existed in “two spheres.”<sup>51</sup> The first challenge to this ideal came not during his term as President (1825-1829), but instead as Secretary of State in the Monroe administration (1817-1825). Acting as agent in the collective mediation between Spain and her colonies, the Holy Alliance (Russia, Prussia and Austria) urged the United States to become a member of a “League of Peace.” In 1820, Adams charged the U.S. Minister to Russia, Henry Middleton, to diplomatically decline Czar Alexander’s overtures. According to Adams’s message to Middleton,

The political system of the United States is also extra-European. To stand in firm and cautious independence of all entanglement in the European system, has been a cardinal point of their policy under every administration of their government from the peace of 1783 to this day...It may be observed that for the repose of Europe, as well as of America, the

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<sup>48</sup> John Quincy Adams, *An Address Delivered at the request of a Commission of the Citizens of Washington; on the Occasion of Reading the Declaration of Independence, on the Fourth of July, 1821* (Cambridge: University Press/Hillard and Metcalf, 1821), p. 32; italics added.

<sup>49</sup> Adams quoted in Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 364.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364.

European and American political systems should be kept as separate and distinct from each other as possible.<sup>52</sup>

Yet, soon after, with the backing of the Holy Alliance (founded in 1815 by Austria, Prussia and Russia), France intervened on the royalist side in the civil war in Spain, Britain's ally since the first Peninsular War, and set its sights on Spanish interests in the New World. In fact, the Holy Alliance powers had deliberately isolated the British by announcing that if Great Britain should interfere to assist the Spanish constitutionalists, they would come to the aid of France. London had little recourse but to dissolve Great Britain's cooperation with the Holy Alliance powers and look westward across the Atlantic for help in checking the intervention of France in Latin America and the even more threatening possibility of the revival of a French colonial empire and French sea power. As a result, in 1823 an alliance was proposed by the British Foreign Minister George Canning between the United States and the United Kingdom.

The American response to the proposal by Foreign Minister Canning was of monumental importance at the time and long remained a hallmark of American policy. Bemis notes that, "Jefferson considered the question the most momentous since the independence of the United States."<sup>53</sup> As with the Wilson administration a century later, circumstances forced America to make a historic choice between two distinct and opposing paths. A clear threat to American interests had been identified. According to Bemis, "a successful intervention by the Holy Alliance in South America now might mean an attack soon after on the United States." Additionally, an alliance with Britain would allow the United States to stand in principle on the side of liberty. The constitutional governments of Britain and Spain<sup>54</sup> had an ideological affinity with the

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<sup>52</sup> JQA to Henry Middleton, Department of State, July 5, 1820. *Writings*, VII, 49-50, cited in Bemis, p. 365. In a note, Bemis reproduces the comment by President Monroe: "I have read with much satisfaction your project of instructions to Mr. Middleton, for the discharge of his duties, in his mission to Russia. The objects to which you call his attention, are judiciously pointed out, and discussed..." James Monroe to JQA, Highland, July 28, 1820. Adams MSS.

<sup>53</sup> Bemis, p. 383.

<sup>54</sup> Though the United Kingdom had adhered to an "unwritten constitution," the English Bill of Rights was introduced in 1689 securing certain rights to citizens under the British Crown. The Spanish Constitution, promulgated by the National Legislative Assembly in 1812, asserted democratic principles such as popular sovereignty, property rights, and equality before the law.



fledging American democracy, and allying with these governments would demonstrate ideological solidarity against the autocratic regimes of the Holy Alliance. Alternatively, by rejecting the offer the United States could remain true to the isolationist tradition of its founders. Indeed, an assent to the British proposals would have flown directly in the face of established, Washington-inspired American neutrality.

Both Jefferson and Madison urged President Monroe to accept the British offer. Jefferson was convinced that using the alliance to successfully repel the threat to the New World would help “to introduce and establish the American System, ‘of keeping out of our land all *foreign powers*, of never permitting those of Europe to interfere with the affairs of our nations.”<sup>55</sup> Bemis notes, “If a war resulted it would be our [America’s] war as well as Europe’s war, with Great Britain on our side.”<sup>56</sup> Madison’s inclination towards the British proposal foreshadowed the policy adopted by Wilson almost a century later. He envisaged the situation as a monumental clash between rivaling political ideologies: “With the British power and navy combined with our own we have nothing to fear from the rest of the nations and in *the great struggle of the Epoch between liberty and despotism*, we owe it to ourselves to sustain the former in this hemisphere at least.”<sup>57</sup>

Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, however, remained unmoved and reasserted his characteristic advocacy of abstention. Adams described the situation as “a very suitable and convenient opportunity for us to take our stand against the Holy Alliance and at the same time to decline the overture of Great Britain. It would be more candid, as well as more dignified, to avow our principles explicitly to Russia and France, than to come in as a cock-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war.”<sup>58</sup> Clearly, Secretary Adams saw America’s “isolation from foreign entanglements” as more important than its ideological affinities with kindred liberal governments. In the end, the

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<sup>55</sup> Jefferson quoted in Bemis, 383; italics in the original.

<sup>56</sup> Madison quoted in Bemis, p. 384; italics in the original.

<sup>57</sup> James Madison to James Monroe, Montpelier, October 30, November 1, 1823. *Writings of Monroe*, VI, 394-5. Italics added.

<sup>58</sup> Secretary of State John Quincy Adams quoted in Bemis, p. 385.

occasion inspired a systematic clarification of foreign policy. “The answer to be given to Baron Tuiyll,” Adams told the President, “the instructions to Mr. Rush [Minister to Britain] relative to the proposals of Mr. Canning, those to Mr. Middleton at St. Petersburg, and those to the Minister who must be sent to France, *must all be parts of a combined system of policy and adapted to each other.*”<sup>59</sup>

The Monroe Doctrine was born. While the doctrine would forever bear the name of the fifth president, it is undeniably a credit to his Secretary of State that this doctrine became a lasting rhumb line around which the United States could navigate its future foreign policy. In the end it might be said that, while the Monroe Doctrine sought to keep European power politics out of the Americas, its assertions marked another underlying conviction – that is, an aversion to U.S. commitment of force and finance in the name of political ideology.

#### **E.      COMPETING NARRATIVES IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY**

While reduction of the basic foreign policy orientation of all U.S. administrations since the Constitutional Convention into two distinct camps would be an oversimplification, it is reasonable to state that since the nineteenth century American foreign policy has been the outgrowth of two competing self-images. Walter McDougall has described these self-images in biblical terms. He has depicted the first as a nation styled as an Old Testament promised land whose people, like the Jews, existed largely in political and religious isolation. The alternate view portrays America as divinely blessed with a New Testament–style obligation to “evangelize” the world, dispensing republican governance and bourgeois Protestant values to those suffering under discredited regimes of oppression.<sup>60</sup>

In the early twentieth century, however, globalizing technology and the rise of aggressive and expanding ideologies, such as Marxism and National Socialism, rendered

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<sup>59</sup> Bemis (p. 385) provides the following reference: *Memoirs*, VI, 177-80. November 7, 1823. Italics inserted.

<sup>60</sup> Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Books, 1997), p. 5.

the former view nearly irreconcilable with a responsible national strategy. Although examples of highly conservative and relatively isolationist administrations such as that of Calvin Coolidge (1923-1929) can be cited,<sup>61</sup> the twentieth century was defined by American actions which, while arguably undertaken in the nation's best interest in security and economic terms, have often been overtly justified through Wilsonian appeals to altruistic idealism and the philanthropic distribution of democratic governance. Historian David Kennedy asserts that every president since Wilson has "embraced the core principles of Wilsonianism."<sup>62</sup>

Indeed, from Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" to George H.W. Bush's "New World Order" the Presidential justifications for U.S. intervention throughout the twentieth century always echoed the lofty goals of President Wilson's Kantian ideal. For decades, the Soviet threat provided the essential bulwark against which to legitimize the interweaving of mutually supporting strands of realism and idealism in U.S. foreign policy. American security was, in fact, intricately interwoven with the fate of nations in both Europe and the Far East; for in the end, as only one ideology could ultimately emerge victorious, each "free" nation hanging precariously in the balance between the two competing ideologies was of vital importance. Thus, at the height of Soviet power, President John F. Kennedy could legitimately hold forth his inaugural pronouncement. "Let every nation know," he promised, "whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe *to assure the survival and the success of liberty*."<sup>63</sup> At face value, the statement is an altruistic blank check to the world. Yet, it was an encroaching and malevolent Soviet threat that credibly linked post-Wilson idealism such as Kennedy's "success of liberty" with Adams's independent "American system" across two centuries

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<sup>61</sup> The Coolidge administration is often considered one of the more isolationist administrations in modern U.S. history. Characterized by his famous declaration, "the chief business of American people is business," President Coolidge is noted for his reticence to engage America in foreign affairs and thus stands as the antithesis of modern internationalism.

<sup>62</sup> David M. Kennedy, "What We owe to WW," *The Atlantic*, March 2005.

<sup>63</sup> President John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961, available at <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/inaug/kennedy.htm>; italics added (accessed on 20 April 2008).

of foreign policy. In other words, the defense of democracy had come to demand engagement. The isolationist prescription was no longer pertinent.

Within a generation after President Kennedy, though, the Cold War had come to an abrupt end. Thus, it was assumed that the diminished ideological threat would bring about a definitive change in American foreign policy. With no competing worldview, America could “tend to its own garden.” Shortly after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Patrick Buchanan, an advisor to President Reagan, summed up his hopeful expectations of the coming draw back of American presence abroad. “The compensating concession we should offer [to Russia is]: total withdrawal of U.S. troops from Europe. If Moscow will get out, we will get out. Once the Red Army goes home, the reason for keeping a U.S. army in Europe vanishes. Forty years after the Marshall Plan, it is time Europe conscripted the soldiers for its own defense.”<sup>64</sup> Indeed, a renewed American reticence to engage in idealism-inspired military action began to emerge in the context of crises from the Balkans to Rwanda.

One of the most famous statements in the lead up to the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991 was made by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. Upon his return from the region he discouraged American intervention in what was seen as a “European” conflict and told President George H.W. Bush that “We don’t have a dog in this fight.”<sup>65</sup> The restrictions on operations in the former Yugoslavia illustrated the limited degree of U.S. and allied commitment as well as American reticence to engage in costly fighting for the sake of ideological concerns. In 1999, in the planning for Operation Allied Force, the insertion of ground forces was taken immediately out of consideration in fear of excessive military casualties. Additionally, during the 78-day strategic bombing campaign, most aircraft sorties were kept above 15,000 feet to avoid potential U.S. and Allied casualties. Considerable criticism has been directed against the Clinton administration’s response to human rights abuses in Rwanda. Though considerable warning had been provided by intelligence sources regarding the impending genocide, the

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<sup>64</sup> Patrick J. Buchanan, “America First- and Second, and Third,” *National Interest*, Spring 1990, p. 79.

<sup>65</sup> Baker cited in Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998), p. 27.

Clinton administration, no doubt mindful of U.S. casualties suffered in Somalia less than a year earlier, decided not to act to stop the killing of 800,000 Hutus and Tutsis.

An example of this changing tide of American idealism can be seen ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the debates of the 2000 Presidential elections. Ironically, the leading voice opposing Wilsonian internationalism was George W. Bush. In his second debate with Vice President Al Gore, the Governor of Texas commented, “I think one way for us to end up being viewed as the ugly American is for us to go around the world saying, we do it this way, so should you...the United States must be humble...humble in how we treat nations that are figuring out how to chart their own course.”<sup>66</sup> In response to a later question as to whether American troops should be involved in attempts at nation building around the world Governor Bush responded, “I don't think so. I think what we need to do is convince people who live in the lands they live in to build the nations. Maybe I'm missing something here. I mean, we're going to have kind of a nation building core from America? Absolutely not.”<sup>67</sup>

These sentiments were consistent with a widespread loss of confidence in the prudence of American liberal internationalism. While it might be pointed out that the year 2000 marked more than a half-century of democratic peace in Western Europe, the future President's statements reflected a broad concern in U.S. society about the damaging consequences of American-led ideological crusades. Indeed, the beginning of the Presidency of George W. Bush was characterized by unilateral decision making and

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<sup>66</sup> Debate transcript, Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), The Second Gore-Bush Presidential Debate, October 11, 2000, <http://www.debates.org/pages/trans2000b.html> (accessed on 20 March 2008).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

“America First” policies.<sup>68</sup> While this unilateralism would not quickly fade, the Adams-esque isolationist tendencies saw their waning moments in the smoldering fires of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. In point of fact, the attack on America inspired a new Wilsonian crusade. David M. Kennedy notes, “Wilson’s ideas continue to dominate American foreign policy in the twenty-first century. In the aftermath of 9/11, they have, if anything, taken on even greater vitality.”<sup>69</sup> Though the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 evinced a realist-styled response, the administration would quickly revive the idealism of the previous century. In the end, given the absence of weapons of mass destruction, Wilsonian idealism is the only professed justification of the administration’s intervention in Iraq still left standing.

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<sup>68</sup> The early phase of George W. Bush’s presidency was marked with significant perceived unilateral and reclusive policy decisions. Two such examples include the administration’s decisions on the Kyoto Protocol and the International Criminal Court (ICC). Though the United States had signed the Kyoto Protocol during the Clinton administration, the Bush administration repeatedly indicated it did not intend to submit the treaty for formal ratification, citing inequalities in application around the world. As early as May 11, 2001, President Bush voiced his administration’s opposition, citing unfair exemptions and significant flaws in the treaty. It was not until May 6, 2002, that President Bush “unsigned” the Rome Statute of the ICC and cited, among other issues, the statute’s potential infringement of national sovereignty. However, as early as 2001, the administration began an aggressive campaign to successfully negotiate bilateral agreements with numerous countries to ensure effective immunity for U.S. citizens from being prosecuted in the court. Washington’s staunch objection to the court’s perceived encroachment of American sovereignty is evident in the aggressive leveraging of both economic and military assistance in these negotiations.

<sup>69</sup> David M. Kennedy, “What W owes to WW,” *The Atlantic*, March 2005.

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### **III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUSH DEMOCRATIZATION STRATEGY**

An examination of the presidency of George W. Bush might identify two distinct and fundamental shifts that occurred in its policies regarding democratization and nation-building. The first of these two shifts took place as a direct reaction to what will undoubtedly be considered one of the defining events in U.S. history, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The second, and perhaps more subtle shift, took place at the point of the administration's collective recognition of the absence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the identified *casus belli* for the U.S. invasion.

However, though the subtlety of this second shift might be mistaken for the oft-occurring manipulation of foreign policy rhetoric, it is far more noteworthy than an adjustment in declaratory policy. The reality of this apparent miscalculation has forced a realignment of national purpose and the emergence of a foreign policy strategy more exclusively dominated by Wilsonian ideals of global democratization than was the case prior to the initiation of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This strategy appears starkly antithetical to the administration's initial identified goals and is significantly at variance with certain expectations of post-Cold War American retrenchment.

This chapter analyzes these two pivotal points in the development of the national strategy. It reviews the Bush administration's transition from an initial phase of relatively Adams-esque caution about nation-building and "America-First" policies, with expectations of capitalizing upon the post-Cold War peace dividend, to a default strategy of bold idealism. In the end, despite initial open skepticism regarding the prudence of Wilsonian internationalism, the current Bush administration policy – at this writing in September 2008 – reflects a strategy that is perhaps more Wilsonian than that of even Woodrow Wilson himself.

Realist E.H. Carr wrote, "Politics are made up of two elements – utopia and reality – belonging to two different planes which can never meet. Every political situation contains mutually incompatible elements of utopia and reality, or morality and



power.”<sup>70</sup> While the history of American foreign policy is rife with rhetorical assent to both elements, possibly no era has more clearly demonstrated the tension between them than our own.

The beginning of the presidency of George W. Bush in 2001 might be characterized as a period of relative restraint in which the President attempted to fulfill his commitment to a “humble” foreign policy that was, while not indifferent to the rest of the world, crafted with deference to “nations that are figuring out how to chart their own course.”<sup>71</sup> Indeed, in contrast with the preceding administration, which had courted favor abroad by signing various international protocols such as the Rome Protocol for the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, the George W. Bush administration evinced a different attitude towards such foreign interaction. Instead, often characterized and even criticized for what was seen as relative isolationism and unilateralism,<sup>72</sup> President Bush’s administration immediately struck a tone different from that of his predecessor. The president’s open opposition to new conventions such as the Kyoto Protocol, the landmine treaty and the International Criminal Court, as well as long-standing regimes such as the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, reflected a diminished confidence in the prudence of reliance on binding international agreements and a stark realism which placed the well being of the United States far above well-intentioned hopes in an idealized global harmony.

Walter A. McDougall noted that the administration’s response to such issues had created a growing concern among allies across the Atlantic. McDougall wrote, “To Europeans it seemed that post-Cold War America was reverting to a go-it-alone, cowboy

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<sup>70</sup> E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1939) pp. 118-119, cited in Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, ed. by Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter (London and New York: Continuum, 1991), p. 16.

<sup>71</sup> Debate transcript, Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), The Second Gore-Bush Presidential Debate, October 11, 2000, available at <http://www.debates.org/pages/trans2000b.html> (accessed 20 March 2008).

<sup>72</sup> Upon return from his second official trip to Europe, President Bush was criticized by Senate leader Tom Daschle (D-South Dakota) for pursuing what he considered an isolationist foreign policy. Daschle said, “I think we are isolating ourselves and in so isolating ourselves, I think we are minimizing ourselves,” Senator Tom Daschle cited in *Human Events*, 30 July 2001, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3827/is\\_200107/ai\\_n8969661](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3827/is_200107/ai_n8969661) (accessed on 15 June 2008).

diplomacy that placed power and growth above humane global values.”<sup>73</sup> The newly elected President Bush became both the emblematic symbol of this European perception as well as the lightning rod for related criticism.

A June 2001 editorial in the Hamburg-based liberal magazine, *Der Spiegel*, accurately represented the widespread opinion among European news sources and cultural elites. The article entitled “Estranged Friends” proclaimed that “The United States and Europe have nothing much in common.” Shortly thereafter the magazine ran a story by Carlos Widmann, who wrote, “Until last week, Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, was for George W. Bush a white spot on the map...[which he called] ‘Yurp.’”<sup>74</sup>

However, regardless of the validity of the accusations, a clear and undeniable reversal of this perceived trend towards greater U.S. isolationism was forthcoming. The attack on America on 11 September 2001 drastically forced the administration’s attention abroad and laid the foundation for an eventual idealist cause which, in conjunction with realist arguments, would justify an invasion of Iraq and the promotion of a bold quest to democratize the Middle East.

#### **A. THE RISE OF WILSONIAN IDEALISM IN THE BUSH STRATEGY**

In an address at the American Enterprise Institute in February 2003, the President himself noted the profound reorientation of thought which the events of 11 September 2001 had inspired. Acknowledging what he considered “a crucial period in the history of our nation, and of the civilized world,” he implored his audience to realize that “[a]s a result [of the terror attacks of September 11th] ... *we must look at security in a new way.*”<sup>75</sup> Though this “new way” was not yet clearly defined, the harbingers of this revised ideological orientation could be seen in the comments of some of the President’s closest advisors.

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<sup>73</sup> Walter A. McDougall, “Will Europe Survive the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?” Foreign Policy Research Institute, July 2007, electronic version available at <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200707.mcdougall.willeuropesurvive.html> (accessed on 10 April 2008).

<sup>74</sup> Ulrich Fichtner, “Mr. Tapfer, der Retter der Welt,” *Der Spiegel*, 11 June 2001, p. 76; and Carlos Widmann, “USA/Mit Schirm und Charme,” *Der Spiegel*, 18 June 2001, p. 128.

<sup>75</sup> President Bush speech at the American Enterprise Institute, “President Discusses the Future of Iraq,” 26 February 2003, available at [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html), p. 1; italics added (accessed on 17 May 2008).

As early as 2000, future Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had criticized the management of U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. She deplored the fact that, “every issue [was] taken on its own terms -- crisis by crisis, day by day.”<sup>76</sup> Rice’s observations were well-founded. The demise of the Soviet Union had removed a powerful twentieth century source of ideological conflict. Since 1991, although the use of American military power was always justified as being intended to counter malevolent aggressors, these efforts were not undertaken as part of a consistent ideological design but instead as a series of responses to specific contingencies. The 1990-1991 campaign against the Iraqi conquest of Kuwait stands as an effective example of this policy disposition.

The successful ousting of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait was not justified as an action to confront a burgeoning malevolent ideology, but instead, as a necessary effort to uphold international law, repel a tyrant, and maintain stability in the region. On 16 January 1991, President George H. W. Bush informed the American people of the commencement of the actions in Kuwait as follows:

Our objectives are clear: Saddam Hussein's forces will leave Kuwait. The legitimate government of Kuwait will be restored to its rightful place, and Kuwait will once again be free. Iraq will eventually comply with all relevant United Nations resolutions, and then, when peace is restored, it is our hope that Iraq will live as a peaceful and cooperative member of the family of nations, thus enhancing the security and stability of the Gulf.<sup>77</sup>

The swift defeat of the Iraqi forces and the liberation of Kuwait followed. However, the decision not to pursue a full invasion of Iraq was a clear indication of the limited and realist orientation of the operation as well as of the administration’s restraint.

Notably, similar realism can also be seen in the remarks by President George W. Bush on the day of the terrorist attacks in America. The President announced to the American people that

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<sup>76</sup> Condoleezza Rice, “Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2000, p.1.

<sup>77</sup> George H. W. Bush, Address to the Nation on 16 January 1991, available at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/ghwbushiraqinvasion.htm> (accessed 17 May 2008)

The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts. I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.<sup>78</sup>

As with his father's admonition just over a decade before, President Bush's commitment spoke of constrained goals to find and destroy the perpetrators of clear and undeniable aggression. Indeed, four days later, the President seemed to reiterate this perspective when he promised a targeted effort of overwhelming force "in a series of decisive actions against terrorist organizations and those who harbor and support them."<sup>79</sup> However, it soon would become apparent that a momentous shift had taken place in the administration's approach to foreign affairs and national security. Michael Gerson, one of the President's speech writers, acknowledged, "After the shock of 9/11, the Republican Party – the party of realism and caution – had become the party of idealism, action, and risk."<sup>80</sup>

In a critique of the nation's post-Cold War strategy, Condoleezza Rice had stated in 2000, "The United States has found it exceedingly difficult to define its 'national interest.'"<sup>81</sup> However, during the months after the terrorist attacks, this would all change. The president's "new way" of looking at security involved a transition from the reactive pragmatism of the 1990s to an ideological campaign featuring a Wilsonian rhetoric that had appeared to be distinctly less convincing to U.S. policy-makers in the years immediately following the end of the Cold War.

The terrorist attacks had heightened national awareness of the threat and prompted a realist-inspired U.S. –led coalition invasion of Afghanistan and the toppling of the Taliban regime. However, as more information became known, the administration was faced with the undeniable reality that radical Islamic fundamentalism was not

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<sup>78</sup> George W. Bush, Address to the Nation on September 15, 2001, p. 1, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010915.html> (accessed on 15 February 2008).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Michael J. Gerson, *Heroic Conservatism: Why Republicans Need to Embrace America's Ideals* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), p. 91.

<sup>81</sup> Rice, p. 1.

confined to the desolate regions of Afghanistan. Indeed, not one of the terrorist hijackers was from Afghanistan, and most of them were from Saudi Arabia. The common link uniting these men was their association with non-state ideological terror networks, intent on doing harm to the Western world and making a bold, critical statement against its liberal values. Furthermore, the potential for such radicals to gain access to weapons of mass destruction seemed to signal to the Bush administration the need for a broader scope to American engagement overseas.

## **B. THE LOOMING THREAT AND THE AMERICAN RESPONSE**

In perhaps his most famous speech – that in which he asked for a Congressional declaration of war against the Imperial German Government – President Woodrow Wilson visualized the world at a historic crossroads with “civilization itself seemingly in the balance.”<sup>82</sup> Unrestricted submarine warfare had not created a new international paradigm, but instead had confirmed for the President the dire need for one. The new international order he foresaw would usher in a lasting peace. As previously noted, President George W. Bush also spoke of the “new world we have entered.”<sup>83</sup> However, his was not a Wilsonian vision of a democratic peace. Instead, the president envisioned a highly dangerous world of burgeoning threats whose destructive potential had been exacerbated by the convergence of “radicalism and technology.”<sup>84</sup> The President warned of “shadowy networks of individuals [which] can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores.”<sup>85</sup> In effect, the clearest manifestation of this new era had occurred on 11 September 2001.

During the Cold War, risk-aversion on both sides of the East-West ideological stalemate helped to contain outright aggression. However, the Bush administration identified three distinct differences in the new global threat environment. First, due to their religious glorification of personal sacrifice, the terrorists attacking the United States

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<sup>82</sup> Woodrow Wilson, 2 April 1917, “Making the World ‘Safe for Democracy’: Woodrow Wilson Asks for War,” <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4943/> (accessed 15 May 2008).

<sup>83</sup> Bush, cover letter, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*.

<sup>84</sup> President Bush, Speech at West Point Graduation, June 2, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html> (accessed on 15 May 2008).

<sup>85</sup> Bush, *National Security Strategy*, p. 1.

and other Western countries were recognized as largely impervious to deterrence by threat of punishment. Second, the attacks of 11 September 2001 demonstrated that the threats in the current age were far more immediate. Lastly, technological sophistication could put the great destructive potential of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) into the hands of regional powers and non-state actors. These actors, unable to compete in the conventional military arena, seemed intent on intimidation, blackmail and the psychological victory of wounding a more powerful opponent.

The 2002 National Security Strategy identified this imbalance and even considered it a justification for a reconsideration of the historical limitations on “preemptive” war. As the strategy pointed out, the legitimacy of preemption has been largely based on the existence of an “imminent threat.” However, as the threat was no longer a presumed invasion but unforeseeable acts of significant societal devastation, no “visible mobilization of armies, navies and air forces preparing to attack” could be expected.<sup>86</sup> Weapons “easily concealed, delivered covertly, and used without warning” could create an enormous potential for massive civilian losses.<sup>87</sup> To the Bush administration, this recognized inability to distinguish the imminence of a threat discredited the existing definition of the requirements for legitimate preemptive action.

The administration began to assert a growing commitment to bold action: “To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively.”<sup>88</sup> Many observers have argued that this strategy clearly constituted a more “proactive” approach to combating threats or, as Gerson notes, one which could be characterized by increased “action” and “risk.”

Yet, the new strategy began to materialize in many ways, largely reminiscent of the ideological confrontation of the previous century. Just as Soviet nuclear armament and an aggressive communist ideology had tightly woven American security with U.S. support of anti-communist liberalism around the world, the potential coupling of militant

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<sup>86</sup> Bush, *National Security Strategy*, p.15.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

Islamic fundamentalists and sympathetic nuclear-capable autocracies instigated the Bush administration's development of a similar bi-nodal strategy composed of elements of realism and idealism.

In addition to supporting increased preparedness for action, the administration also began to widen the scope of the American response to the emerging threat. In the State of the Union address on 29 January 2002, President Bush spoke first of realist objectives. He warned potential aggressors that should they decide to act against America, they "will not escape the justice of this nation."<sup>89</sup> He said that the U.S. Armed Forces would "shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice." Yet then, in what has become one of his most famous pronouncements, the President broadened the "War on Terror" by signaling that the campaign would widen from a hunt for non-state aggressors to include recognized state entities. He then famously identified Iraq, Iran and North Korea as "an axis of evil...[that could] threaten the peace of the world."<sup>90</sup> Only two months before he had told the world that nations would have to make a choice. "You are either with us or you are against us," he announced.<sup>91</sup> Though at that time he said that he had "no specific nation in mind," by January 2002, he had clearly made up his mind and was prepared to name the states forming what he called "an axis of evil."

This "axis of evil" formulation had two distinct effects. First, it directly threatened those regimes which remained a continuing menace to U.S. security. More importantly, however, it created the foundation for a clear and consistent national strategy which, Condoleezza Rice had noted, had been sorely lacking. Through the President's address, Iraq, Iran and North Korea had become adversaries in an idealized confrontation. These countries were perceived as threats, owing in part to their evident nuclear ambitions.

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<sup>89</sup> President George W. Bush, *The State of the Union Address, January 2002*, p. 1, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>, (accessed on 15 January 2008).

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> George W. Bush, *President Welcomes President Chirac to White House*, November 2001, p. 2, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011106-4.html>, (accessed on 6 February 2006).

All were non-liberal regimes, hostile to Western democratic ideals, and this characteristic was a dominating factor in the President's strategy henceforth.

The overt Wilsonian idealism of the new national strategy would become more pronounced in a speech delivered by President Bush at West Point in June 2002. In remarks which now seem prophetic, the president spoke of former graduates, commissioned during the Second World War, who had helped in "defeating Japan and Germany, *and then reconstructing those nations as allies.*" As with those former cadets who had graduated over 50 years earlier, these new officers could look forward to the possibility that as the "the sun set on their struggle," they might also live "to see a world transformed."<sup>92</sup> Clearly, that which had once been cast as a mission to hunt down and eliminate terrorists was being firmly grafted to a Wilsonian vision of global pacification in a "world...made fit and safe to live in."<sup>93</sup> "Our nation's cause has always been larger than our nation's defense," the President reminded the graduates. "We fight, as we always fight, for a just peace -- a peace that favors human liberty. We will defend the peace."<sup>94</sup>

The President's closing words echoed the sentiments of the nation's 28th President. In calling the nation to war in Europe, Wilson had told Congress that America's citizens "must dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have...for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, *she can do no other.*"<sup>95</sup> Less than a century later, President Bush implored Americans to fulfill this same timeless obligation. "Building this just peace," the President said, "is America's opportunity, *and America's duty.*"<sup>96</sup>

By the conclusion of the President's June 2002 address to the cadets, it was apparent that the realism in the American strategic calculus had been closely matched by

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<sup>92</sup> Bush speech at West Point Graduation, June 2, 2002.

<sup>93</sup> Woodrow Wilson, "President Wilson's Fourteen Points: Delivered in Joint Session, January 8, 1918," [http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President\\_Wilson%27s\\_Fourteen\\_Points](http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/President_Wilson%27s_Fourteen_Points) (accessed on 15 January 2008).

<sup>94</sup> Bush, Speech at West Point Graduation, June 2, 2002.

<sup>95</sup> Woodrow Wilson, 2 April 1917, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4943/>; italics added (accessed on 15 January 2008).

<sup>96</sup> Bush, Speech at West Point Graduation, June 2, 2002.



a growing idealistic cause. Presenting a Manichean vision of the world stage, the president told his listeners and the nation that “We are in a conflict between good and evil.” Furthermore, he stated that the U.S. military’s and the nation’s objectives were in fact more ambitious than the current engagement to bring the perpetrators of terrorism to justice. Instead, the President implored the cadets to remember that “America has a greater objective than controlling threats and containing resentment. We will work for a just and peaceful world *beyond the war on terror*.”<sup>97</sup>

The National Security Strategy published in September 2002 reinforced this depiction of the administration’s strategy. Like his predecessors, President Bush made it immediately clear that the security of the American people was the highest priority of his administration. The President reiterated his commitment to this task: “Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government.”<sup>98</sup> In the most basic sense, this defense is certainly poised against those who seek to do America harm. However, the President’s notion of defense clearly encompassed more than simply protection against physical harm. “Freedom,” he stated, is “the birthright of every person.” Moreover, he declared, “These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society – and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.”<sup>99</sup>

While the defense of Americans and their values would likely meet minimal principled objection, the “proactive” pursuit of this national “cause” has historically defined the difference between realism and idealism in American foreign policy. The universal extension of the aforementioned American “values of freedom,” while perhaps ideologically philanthropic, has nevertheless often seemed both incompatible with the values of many societies around the world and, furthermore, too large a task for the commitment of American blood and treasure. Yet, the marriage of this ideological altruism with national security began to dominate American foreign policy decisions after

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<sup>97</sup> Bush, Speech at West Point Graduation, June 2, 2002, italics added.

<sup>98</sup> Bush, *National Security Strategy*.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

11 September 2001. Dubbed “a distinctly American internationalism” by the President, this approach to national security, he asserted, would “reflects the union of our values and our national interests.”<sup>100</sup> In the President’s discourse, “the safety of America and the peace of the planet”<sup>101</sup> were joined under the threat from “the axis of evil.”

### **C. THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE SPEECH AND THE INVASION OF IRAQ**

On 26 February 2003, the President spoke at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). He presented what might be considered the administration’s clearest justification of the action which it was prepared to take in Iraq and the first step in the new, more proactive, security strategy. The consistency of the President’s justification with the strategic vision which had developed in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001 are quite clear. However, the speech at the AEI is particularly informative. Delivered less than a month before combat operations in Iraq began, the speech represents the administration’s most refined vision of the policy which was about to be implemented by force.

The President began with reference to the universal scope of the strategy, noting the “crucial period in the history of our nation, and the civilized world.”<sup>102</sup> He then made the case for U.S. action specifically against the Iraqi regime, led by a dictator who is “building and hiding weapons that could enable him to dominate the Middle East and intimidate the civilized world.”<sup>103</sup> The President urged action against Saddam Hussein’s regime, to eliminate a tyrant with “close ties to terrorist organizations” who “could supply them with the terrible means to strike this country.”<sup>104</sup> This realism-inspired justification for invasion depicted American efforts as “opposing the greatest danger in

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<sup>100</sup> Bush, *National Security Strategy*.

<sup>101</sup> Bush Speech at West Point Graduation, June 2, 2002.

<sup>102</sup> Bush speech at the American Enterprise Institute, “President Discusses the Future of Iraq,” 26 February 2003, [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html), p. 1, (accessed on 8 June 2008).

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

the war on terror: outlaw regimes arming terrorists with weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>105</sup> The President then assured his audience that “[t]he safety of the American people depends on ending this direct and growing threat.”<sup>106</sup> In this statement, America was provided undeniable proof that the coming effort in Iraq had American security as its bedrock intention.

There are two additional important references made by the President in this speech which reveal much about the administration’s pre-war disposition. First, it is noteworthy that, regarding Iraq’s political future, the President remained conspicuously impartial, stating that “[t]he United States has no intention of determining the precise form of Iraq’s new government.”<sup>107</sup> Secondly, in justifying America’s imminent use of force, the President held forth a clear and concise depiction of his administration’s ongoing strategy: “American interests in security, and America’s belief in liberty, both lead in the same direction: to a free and peaceful Iraq.”<sup>108</sup> Iraq was thus depicted as both a realist threat and an idealistic beachhead in the global advance of democracy. In the aftermath of the invasion, as evidence of the allegedly imminent Iraqi WMD threat never materialized, only one of these tenets would remain politically viable.

#### **D. REVISING THE JUSTIFICATION FOR U.S. ACTION IN VIEW OF THE ABSENCE OF WMD**

A substantial setback in the Bush administration’s strategy began to emerge within only a few months of the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. Though the operation had been justified as an effort to eliminate a regime which threatened the United States and the world with weapons of mass destruction, the search for these weapons was unsuccessful. A tacit acknowledgement of the futility of the search was apparent. Indeed, in a highly criticized skit at the Radio and Television Correspondents Association on 23 March 2004, President Bush was shown desperately searching the oval office for

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<sup>105</sup> Bush speech at the American Enterprise Institute.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

the undiscovered weapons of mass destruction. Though intended as self-effacing humor, the ill-advised gaffe and the resulting criticism reflected a growing exasperation in both the administration and the American people, who had expected to find substantive justification for this first major military intervention under the newly identified security strategy.<sup>109</sup>

The absence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction was an undeniable crushing blow to the new strategy. Regardless of the Iraqi leader's malevolence, without WMD or evidence of a continuing concerted effort at their development and production, Saddam Hussein's Iraq did not meet the President's standard for "regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons" with a view to "threatening the United States and the world."<sup>110</sup> As a result, it became increasingly clear that the United States had, though perhaps unintentionally, unmistakably commenced upon a path of regime change, democratization, and nation-building in the name of democratic peace – precisely the character of U.S. entanglement President Bush had once deplored.

#### **E. THE APOGEE OF WILSONIAN IDEALISM: THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF MARCH 2006**

The 2002 National Security Strategy had reflected a heightened national awareness of the threat to domestic security, and maintained some of the characteristic realism typified in "balance of power" politics. Failure to find the alleged WMD in Iraq, however, had a distinctive effect on the maintenance of this strategy. The realism-inspired justification also provided in the AEI speech before the invasion of Iraq had become largely obsolete, irrelevant, and even embarrassing. In fact, the absence of WMD in Iraq stood out as a momentous U.S. intelligence failure.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>"Democrats Call Bush's Comedy Skit Tasteless," accessed at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A24883-2004Mar25&notFound=true> (accessed on 30 July 2008).

<sup>110</sup> Bush, *The State of the Union Address, January 2002*.

<sup>111</sup> "The Iraq Survey Group ... found that pre-war intelligence estimates of Iraqi WMD stockpiles were wrong." *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, March 2006), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>, p. 23 (accessed on 26 January 2008).

In turn, a marked shift occurred towards a significantly more idealistic approach to U.S. foreign policy. In the absence of Iraqi WMD, the justification for the continued U.S. presence in Iraq significantly changed. The “security of the American people” was, in effect, displaced by “a united, stable, and democratic Iraq.”<sup>112</sup> Indeed, idealism is the most evident tone of the 2006 National Security Strategy. The new strategy reflects an idealistic justification for the exertion of U.S. power around the world. With its initial success in Afghanistan threatened and a diminishing validation for action in Iraq, the administration refined the strategy and set forth a security vision in which the dominant priority had clearly shifted toward philanthropic altruism. Though the administration maintained that the effort to “defend our [American] liberty and ...our [American] lives”<sup>113</sup> was irrevocably linked to “confronting evil and lawless regimes,” the dominating theme of the new security strategy was a proclivity to commit American might to actualize a Wilsonian vision of “a just and peaceful world.”<sup>114</sup>

In his introductory letter to the 2006 National Security Strategy the President noted that America’s “most solemn obligation” is “to protect the security of the American people,” but such sentiments were quickly eclipsed by grander objectives.<sup>115</sup> The strategy even stated that the “ultimate goal” of U.S. policy is “ending tyranny in our world.”<sup>116</sup> Thus, policy realism was in essence placed on par with liberalism as the President asserted that, in seeking a peaceful distribution of power, “[t]he goal of our statecraft is to help create a world of democratic, well-governed states.”<sup>117</sup> The change is noteworthy. While the U.S. invasion of Iraq demonstrated America’s willingness to engage in preventive war in the face of a perceived threat, the 2006 National Security Strategy appeared to call for continued U.S. intervention for the purpose of realizing an ambitious vision of world peace.

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<sup>112</sup> Bush, *National Security Strategy*.

<sup>113</sup> Bush, Speech at West Point Graduation, June 2, 2002.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Bush, *National Security Strategy*.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

In the absence of a traditional realist cause the Bush administration developed a long-term strategy to protect Americans which clearly found its strongest roots in the liberal internationalist tradition. “Democratization” might rightly be considered the Bush administration’s ultimate justification for the use of force. The President’s goal was to make Americans more secure by ensuring the global spread of a democratic peace. The President clearly stated in the 2006 NSS that “the advance of liberty will make America more secure.”<sup>118</sup> In effect, the administration chose to rely largely on the principles of President Wilson’s idealistic vision to ensure American security.

#### **F. A STRATEGY OF REVOLUTIONISM**

British historian Martin Wight provided an enlightening analytical framework by which to evaluate the character of the transition that U.S. security strategy has undergone since the beginning of the George W. Bush administration. In his book entitled *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, Wight characterized the leading traditions in the history of Western thinking about international relations. Realists, whose views Wight described as Machiavellian, subscribe to a vision of international politics as “those who emphasize and concentrate upon the element of international anarchy” – that is, “a multiplicity of independent sovereign states acknowledging no political superior, whose relationships are ultimately regulated by warfare.”<sup>119</sup> Wight added, “The common assertion of all these [Realist] writers...is that really there is no such thing as international society, and the evidence for its existence does not bear examination.”<sup>120</sup>

The second tradition identified by Wight, called the Grotian or Rationalist view, is the outlook of “those who concentrate on, and believe in the value of, the element of international intercourse in a condition predominantly of international anarchy.”<sup>121</sup> The question, according to Rationalists, regarding the nature of international society “posits that in the state of nature men are still bound by the law of nature.” Thus, “[s]overeignty

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<sup>118</sup> Bush, *National Security Strategy*.

<sup>119</sup> Wight, p. 7.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

had indeed passed to different states, by social contracts, but the original unity of the human race survived; there was a law of nations acknowledged by sovereigns, even if violated, and this was the original natural law, which was legally binding and not just a moral imperative.”<sup>122</sup>

The final tradition in Wight’s analysis is that of the Revolutionist or Kantian view. Kantians “are those who emphasize and concentrate upon the element of the society of states, or international society.”<sup>123</sup> Kantians reject both the Machiavellian view as well as the Grotian view. They are “defined more precisely as those who believe so passionately in the moral unity of the society of states or international society, that they identify themselves with it, and therefore they both claim to speak in the name of this unity, and experience an overriding obligation to give effect to it, as the first aim of their international policies. For them, the whole of international society transcends its parts.”<sup>124</sup>

In the foreword to Martin Wight’s work, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, Adam Roberts admitted that there exist significant “objections to the idea of forcing all the rich complexity of thought about international relations into three pigeon holes.”<sup>125</sup> He noted that Wight held that these “three traditions should be seen, not as pigeon-holes or labels, but rather as strands, or primary colours, which are intermixed in endless different ways by different practitioners and writers.”<sup>126</sup>

Thus, a fair assessment of the security strategy of the George W. Bush administration does not result in a stark compartmentalization of the ideas within one or another of the traditions identified by Wight, but instead shows the dominance among these differing “strands, or primary colours” of the Kantian or Revolutionist tradition. The transition in the George W. Bush administration’s policy has proceeded, due in part to significant historical events, from a disposition in which the Machiavellian or Realist view was the dominant “strand” to one in which the Kantian view has risen to preeminence.

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<sup>122</sup> Wight, p. 38.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>125</sup> Adam Roberts, “Foreword,” p. xxv.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. xxv.

As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, American foreign policy has always included elements of the Kantian view, with Woodrow Wilson's presidency recognized as the superlative example and effective commencement for its dominance in modern U.S. foreign policy. However, it can be argued that since early 2003, the Bush administration's rhetorical justification for American involvement abroad, particularly in the Middle East, has been, through the course of events, significantly depleted of realist elements and has become dominated instead by an idealism that has surpassed that of even the Wilson administration.

President Wilson defended his decision to commit U.S. forces in the European conflict with significant appeals to idealistic notions of "the vindication of right, of human right."<sup>127</sup> However, there exist significant Grotian, or rationalist, overtones in his vision of post-conflict peace and his preoccupation with international law. Wilson's compromises in the peace negotiations also illustrate his willingness to make deals falling short of his preferred principles.

President Bush, however, has shown less pragmatism than Wilson in his foreign-policy decision making. Respect for national sovereignty in its historic understanding has been subjugated to certain ideals perceived as universal and nonnegotiable. In President Bush's words, "These nonnegotiable demands of human dignity [liberty and justice] are protected most securely in democracies."<sup>128</sup> In addition, democracy and the democratic values of Western countries have been described as innate demands of all of humanity whose global establishment is inevitable and, in large measure, the responsibility of the United States and the rest of the free world. While the President announced at West Point that "The requirements of freedom apply fully to...the entire Islamic world,"<sup>129</sup> such a comment could have been understood merely as an expression of America's longstanding sympathy for people suffering under oppressive regimes. However, as Wight noted in a passage previously cited, the Revolutionists can be defined as "those who believe so passionately in the moral unity of the society of states or

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<sup>127</sup> Woodrow Wilson, 2 April 1917, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4943/> (accessed on 8 July 2008).

<sup>128</sup> Bush, *National Security Strategy*.

<sup>129</sup> Bush, Speech at West Point Graduation, June 2, 2002.



international society that they identify themselves with it and therefore they claim to speak in the name of this unity and experience an overriding obligation to give effect to it.”<sup>130</sup>

Wight provides a fuller description of this perspective as well. He writes that the Revolutionist “assertion that international society is a *civitas maxima*, a super-state (and ‘is’ here means ‘is essentially,’ ‘ought to be’ or ‘is destined to be’), raises at once the question of conformity and non-conformity. What is to be done about the citizens of the *civitas maxima*, i.e., states, which reject its authority in principle or counteract it in practice?” Wight provides one answer given in the *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* (1579) “which deduced from the unity of human society the right of intervention to protect the oppressed. This is an early statement of the Revolutionist idea that horizontal ties are more important than, and may override, vertical ties.”<sup>131</sup> Evidence of such views has become undeniably predominant in the Bush administration’s discourse, including the 2006 National Security Strategy.

The burgeoning dominance of this new Revolutionist view appeared in the President’s State of the Union Address in January 2006. President Bush informed America that “We’re making progress in the march of freedom, and some of the most important progress is taking place in a region that has not known the blessings of liberty, the broader Middle East.”<sup>132</sup> These comments presume that it is a distinct mission of the United States to initiate and oversee a worldwide democratic conversion. While in November 2003 the President had depicted the democratization of Iraq as “a watershed event in the global democratic revolution,”<sup>133</sup> his State of the Union message revealed the administration’s conviction as to the American obligation to carry forward that ideological revolution. The President promised, “our nation is committed to an historic,

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<sup>130</sup> Wight, p. 8.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>132</sup> Bush, “The State of the Union,” January 2006.

<sup>133</sup> President George W. Bush, “President Discusses Freedom in Iraq and the Middle East,” 6 November 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html> (accessed on 12 July 2008).

long-term goal — we seek the end of tyranny in our world.”<sup>134</sup> The missionary character that Wight’s analysis attributed to Revolutionists seemed indeed to have taken command of the Bush administration’s outlook.

It is this missionary spirit which now sustains the U.S. effort in Iraq. Indeed, for many it has become the sole remaining source of conviction for continued sacrifice. However, like all strategies this Revolutionist idealism is not without considerable vulnerabilities. Indeed, regardless of whether the U.S. invasion of Iraq has ultimately strengthened American security or not, it is only the installation of a stable democracy in Iraq which will redeem the administration’s vision and justify coalition sacrifices. However noble in its ideals, the success of this strategy will be seen through the lens of time. Thus it is important to identify the inherent obstacles which stand in the way of the eventual success of this ambitious strategy. The following chapter focuses on the obstacles to the fulfillment of the Kantian and Wilsonian vision which has come to dominate U.S. democratization strategy.

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<sup>134</sup> Bush, “The State of the Union” January 2006.

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## **IV. OBSTACLES TO A DEMOCRATIC PEACE**

The lack of definitive proof of the imminence of Saddam Hussein's alleged threat to America – the theory that (a) he had illegally produced WMD and (b) was prepared to transfer them to terrorist groups – has radically altered the character of U.S. security strategy since the invasion of Iraq. The strategy, seemingly now based entirely on U.S. leadership in promoting “democratization,” finds its sole foundation in the Kantian expectations of liberal governance. However, the success of this strategy is largely dependent on three premises: (1) the cogency of democratic peace theory; (2) the realization of positive societal changes through democracy; and (3) the successful alignment of Western democratic and liberal values with the ideological proclivities of the targeted regime and/or society. Impediments to the success of the Bush administration's democratization strategy can be identified within each of these three categorical demarcations. It is important to recognize and examine these potential fault lines in the strategy in order to ensure the optimal selection of target regimes for potential democratization and, ultimately, to evaluate the prudence of broadening the strategy's current implementation.

### **A. DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY**

Though significant empirical evidence, as noted in Chapter II, seems to support Immanuel Kant's theory of achievable perpetual peace, the pacifying effects of democracy on interstate interaction are not without considerable limitations and have proven to be far less of a guarantee of overall peace than some analysts and political leaders have maintained. In fact, critical examinations of the causal logic in the theory have discovered significant shortcomings in the hypothesis that “common norms of live-and-let-live and domestic institutions ... constrain the recourse to war.”<sup>135</sup> A growing body of evidence suggests that, although there may be a significant correlation between

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<sup>135</sup> Sebastian Rosato, “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory,” *American Political Science Review* (Vol. 97, No. 4) (November 2003), p. 585.

dyadic democratic co-existence, the two variables may be only minimally related or, in fact, democracy may not be a causal factor at all.

One objection to democratic peace theory points out that other phenomena, aside from a set of countries' liberal regimes, may account for their peaceful co-existence. Sebastian Rosato observed that "the democratic peace is essentially a post-World War II phenomenon restricted to the Americas and Western Europe," and suggests that the apparent democratic peace during this time period is a result of the fact that "the United States has been the dominant power in both these regions since World War II and has [successfully] placed an overriding emphasis on regional peace."<sup>136</sup> Rosato's analysis reviewed "all pairs of democracies directly or indirectly contiguous to one another or separated by less than 150 miles of water between 1950 and 1990."<sup>137</sup> During that time period, he found that there were a total of 2,427 double democratic dyads. Within this field he determined that 90% of these double democratic dyads were "confined to two geographic regions, the Americas and Western Europe."<sup>138</sup>

From this evidence, a reasonable conclusion might be drawn which asserts that the lasting peace among democracies might be in fact causally related to the dominance of American power and influence in the two regions. "American preponderance has underpinned, and continues to underpin stability and peace in both of these regions. In the Americas the United States has successfully adopted a two-pronged strategy of driving out the European colonial powers and selectively intervening either to ensure that regional conflicts do not escalate to the level of serious military conflict or to install regimes that are sympathetic to its interests."<sup>139</sup>

Similarly, in Europe, American influence has had a profound effect on the maintenance of peace between democratic states. Rosato contended that "the experience of both World Wars persuaded American policymakers that U.S. interests lay in

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<sup>136</sup> Rosato, p. 599.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 600.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., Among the total (2,427) double democratic dyads, "1,306 (54%) were comprised of two European states, 465 (19%) were comprised of two European states, and 418 (17%) comprised one American state and one European state."

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

preventing the continent [from] ever returning to the security competition that had plagued it since the Napoleonic Wars.” He further noted that U.S. initiatives such as “the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty, European integration, and the forward deployment of American troops on German soil should all be viewed from this perspective” and might account more fully for the lasting peace than democratic regimes. In summary, Rosato concluded, “the United States has been by far the most dominant state in both the Americas and Western Europe since World War II and has been committed, above all, to ensuring that both regions remain at peace.”<sup>140</sup> In other words, there is strong evidence to suggest that U.S. military strength and credibility in upholding security commitments, and not only shared democratic ideals, help to account for the lasting peace between the democratic states predominantly concentrated in the Americas and Europe.<sup>141</sup>

A second challenge to democratic peace theory has arisen from the observation that, historically, liberal states with representative governments have not consistently treated each other as the theory predicts. In fact, many have actually been involved in armed conflict with each other. In other words, the pacifying effects of Kant’s uniquely republican virtue of public constraint<sup>142</sup> have not always materialized. Skeptics as to the validity of the theory cite as refutation numerous conflicts between relatively liberal regimes extending from the U.S.-British War of 1812 to the Israel-Lebanon War in

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<sup>140</sup> Rosato, p. 600.

<sup>141</sup> Alian Crémieux, a French author, set out a similar analysis of the pivotal role of U.S. political-military commitments in maintaining peace and stability in Europe. For a discussion of Crémieux’s work, see David S. Yost, “Transatlantic Relations and Peace in Europe,” *International Affairs*, vol. 78 (April 2002), pp. 277-300. See also Azar Gat, “The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 86, no. 4 (July/August 2007), p. 65.

<sup>142</sup> The “public constraint mechanism” engenders general reluctance to engage in armed conflict “because leaders respond to the general public’s aversion to war.” Rosato, p. 587.

2006.<sup>143</sup> In response, democratic peace theorists have sought to narrow the definition of democracy, and thereby revalidate the hypothesis. Such restrictive definitions of “democracy” are useful in the analysis of the U.S. democratization strategy in two ways. First, they establish a comparatively rigorous basis for the conclusions drawn on the statistical examinations of the theory. Secondly, once identified, these qualifying characteristics of democracy provide a clear indication of the optimal regime characteristics which will likely lead to the desired end state – that is, a democratic peace.

Innumerable attributes have been put forth to identify the nature of non-warring democracies. Oft cited domestic characteristics include such elements as universal suffrage and the absence of corruption, bribery and voter fraud. James Lee Ray, for instance, isolated three defining characteristics which qualify a state as a “stable” democracy and, in doing so, statistically confirmed the notion of a democratic peace between liberal regimes. Ray’s characteristics of “states ...sufficiently democratic to avoid war” are as follows:

- 1) “leaders are selected in a process based on fair, competitive elections,” and such elections are defined as “those in which at least two formally independent political parties (or other groups) present candidates,”
- 2) “at least 50% of the adult population is allowed to vote,” and
- 3) “the political system in question has produced at least one peaceful, constitutional transfer of executive power from one independent political party to another by means of an election.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> By 1812, America was a fully functioning democracy. Britain, while technically a monarchy, was more liberal than other monarchies. It had an independent parliament and provided British citizens civil rights which were so desired by colonials abroad that 36 years earlier, their withholding was the impetus for war. Britain remains a “constitutional monarchy” today, yet no one would dispute its democratic character. Despite skepticism as to the true democratic character of Lebanon, elections were overseen in 2005 by “[a] 100-member European Union (EU) delegation [which] monitored voter registration, campaigns, and voting, and approved the election as free of foreign influence and fair, despite some late accusations of vote-buying.” Election results reported at “Lebanon: Election results,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed at <http://www.cfr.org/publication/8195/lebanon.html#4>. It must nonetheless be noted that the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War also involved Syria and Hezbollah, which acted as a proxy for Iran.

<sup>144</sup> James Lee Ray, “Does Democracy Cause Peace?” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1998. 1:33.

The last characteristic is perhaps the most important for it identifies one of the largest obstacles to the success of the U.S. democratization strategy – sustainability over time. In fact, it might be said that meeting the challenge of sustaining the liberal regime for an extended period is as important as the peaceful transfer of power. Absent this minimal duration there appears to be a far lower probability of a democratically encouraged peace. R.J. Rummel set this minimal associated duration at approximately three years. Qualifying the correlation between liberal governance and the absence of war, Rummel underscored the necessity of “undoubted” or “well-established” democracies. It is thus, according to Rummel, this democratic maturity which allows for “peace-sufficient democratic procedures to become accepted and democratic culture to settle in.”<sup>145</sup> However, proponents of democratic peace theory make no promises for peaceful interaction between “democratizing” or “not yet fully democratic” states. In fact, research indicates that it is in this initial phase of transition towards presumably “well-established” democratic status that democratizing states are most likely to become involved in conflict.

Evidence of this apparent phenomenon is cited by Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder. They found that “democratizing states were more likely to fight wars than were states that had undergone no regime change.”<sup>146</sup> Moreover, they concluded, “Based on the competitiveness of political participation, the probability that democratizing states would fight any type of war was, on average, about 75% greater than for states undergoing no regime change.”<sup>147</sup> More notably, their research indicated that, “[t]he probability of interstate wars for countries in the process of democratization was, on average, about twice as large as for countries experiencing no regime change.”<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> R. J Rummel, “Power Kills: Appendix 1.1, Q and A on the Fact that Democracies Do Not Make War on Each Other,” available at <http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/PK.APPEN1.1.HTM> (accessed on 12 May 2008).

<sup>146</sup> Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War,” *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer 1995), p. 12.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*



Additionally, regardless of the reality of the democratic norms within a country, it is has been asserted that an additional causal factor, that of perception, might greatly hinder (or enhance) peaceful interaction among states. By this logic, “democracies will only trust and respect one another *if they consider each other to be democratic*.”<sup>149</sup> The implications of this caveat are clear, particularly, as Rosato noted, when “policy makers’ personal beliefs and party affiliations, or strategic interest, often prelude coherent, accurate and stable assessments of regime type.”<sup>150</sup> It is not merely the reality of the democratic character of a state, but potentially also the external perception of that state, which must be present to secure a democratic peace. Correspondingly, confidence in the cogency of the idea that “joint democracy enables democracies to remain at peace”<sup>151</sup> is distinctly lowered. In other words, if the perception of a state’s democratic character is the decisive causal factor for a democratic peace, the true character of a regime may be irrelevant and non-causal; and the entire hypothesis could thus fail.

A final challenge to democratic peace theory is the impact which limited resources and increasing demand between states would have on interstate peace. John Baden, chairman of the Foundation for Research on Economics and the Environment, noted that one historic exception constitutes a weakness in the theory. “The exception that makes even established democracies take up arms against one another is fish.”<sup>152</sup> Baden cited disputes between Britain, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and the United States over fishing rights that often escalated into violence; and this violence sometimes involved naval gunfire. The reason he gave for why this issue had trumped the ideological congruence between these Western, liberal, democratic states was that “too many fishermen chase too few fish.”<sup>153</sup> The obvious implication of this anomaly for the current U.S. democratization strategy in the Middle East is daunting. In a region of limited, diminishing oil reserves and deep religious and sectarian divisions, whose

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<sup>149</sup> Rosato, p. 592; italics added.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> John Baden cited in “Do democracies fight each other?” BBC News, 17 November 2004, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4017305.stm> (accessed on 12 August 2008).

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

markets are threatened by growing initiatives for greater conservation measures and alternative energy sources in many countries, the peaceful avoidance of a local equivalent of Baden's fishing scenario even among future Middle Eastern "democracies" seems implausible. As Rosato has noted, "democracies do not reliably externalize their domestic norms of conflict resolution, nor do they generally treat each other with trust and respect when their interests clash."<sup>154</sup>

Independent of any inherent weaknesses in the democratic peace hypothesis, U.S. democratization strategy faces significant challenges in the crucial phase of "installing" democracies in non-democratic regions in pursuit of the expected peace benefits. Indeed, what Nils Petter Gleditsch, Lene Siljeholm Christiansen and Havard Hegre consider the "regional environment of the new democracies"<sup>155</sup> is of capital importance and provides another formidable obstacle to the establishment of a democratic peace.

In 1983, Michael Doyle observed that while "[l]iberalism does appear to disrupt the pursuit of balance-of-power politics," it "is not inherently 'peace-loving'; nor is it consistently restrained or peaceful in intent."<sup>156</sup> This apparent contradiction with Kant's view that a free people would be cautious in "decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war"<sup>157</sup> is explained through what Doyle identified as "the differences between liberal practice toward other liberal societies and liberal practice toward nonliberal societies."<sup>158</sup> Doyle argued that while "liberalism has achieved extraordinary success in the first," it has "contributed to exceptional confusion in the second."<sup>159</sup> Doyle highlighted the fact that "*liberal states have become involved in numerous wars with nonliberal states.*"<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Rosato, p. 588.

<sup>155</sup> Nils Petter Gleditsch, Lene Siljeholm Christiansen and Havard Hegre, "Democratic Jihad? Military Intervention and Democracy," Paper prepared for the Workshop on "Resources, Governance Structures, and Civil War"; ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Uppsala, Sweden, 13-18 April 2004, p. 34 available at [http://www.prio.no/sptrans/-139794680/file49713\\_democraticjihadapril2007.pdf](http://www.prio.no/sptrans/-139794680/file49713_democraticjihadapril2007.pdf) (accessed on 28 February 2008).

<sup>156</sup> Michael Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer 1983), p. 206.

<sup>157</sup> Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1957), p. 13.

<sup>158</sup> Doyle, p. 206.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 213; italics in the original.

These observations were empirically validated in a 1997 analysis conducted by Arvid Rakenrud and Havard Hegre. This study concluded that between 1840 and 1992 “dyads of two democracies had a 57% lower probability than mixed dyads of onset of interstate war.”<sup>161</sup> Moreover, it was also estimated that these dyads had a 35% lower probability of resorting to war than non-democratic dyads.<sup>162</sup> Thus the dyads with the greatest risk of warfare were those which consisted of democratic and non-democratic states.

Game theory methodology might provide some insight into one of the causes of this apparent phenomenon. The loose application of Rousseau’s famous “stag hunt” theory<sup>163</sup> can help to illustrate the possible effects of bias in states’ normal decision making processes as a result of the existence of a mixed dyadic relationship and the associated character preconceptions of both states. The theory presumes that two states – like two men hunting for a stag – share an interest in a common good (peace) which could be attained through cooperation. As neither can know for certain the willingness of the other to cooperate fully, each instead acts in its own narrow self interest (that is, in an uncooperative way) to minimize the risk of acting cooperatively or in a “non-aggressive” way on its own. In Rousseau’s illustration, each hunter foregoes the stag and instead pursues an animal he is capable of catching on his own, a hare. Extending this analogy into the realm of international relations, each state would thus forego the risks of non-aggression and instead resort to aggression. The diagram below illustrates the dynamic.

In the illustration, it is assumed that arbitrary numerical values can be have been assigned to each of the possible outcomes of each state’s decision with ten being the best, 8 as a secondary reward, 7 as a tertiary reward and obviously 0 the worst. The numerical results of each combination are depicted as (State A, State B) in the matrices below.

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<sup>161</sup> Arvid Rakenrud and Havard Hegre’s findings cited in Nils Petter Gleditsh, Lene Siljeholm Christiansen and Havard Hegre, “Democratic Jihad? Military Intervention and Democracy,” Paper prepared for the Workshop on “Resources, Governance Structures, and Civil War”; ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Uppsala, Sweden, 13-18 April 2004, p. 2.

<sup>162</sup> Arvid Rakenrud and Havard Hegre, “The Hazard of War: Reassessing the Evidence for the Democratic Peace,” *Journal of Peace Research* 34(4): 385-404.

<sup>163</sup> For background on Rousseau’s “stag hunt” discussion, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), pp. 167-168.

		State B	
		non-aggression	aggression
State A	non-aggression	10,10	0,8
	aggression	8,0	7,7

Figure 1. Stag hunt illustration (interstate relations).

Representative governance was envisioned as one way to annul this inherent bias toward aggression among autocratic states as the public disinclination towards war would tend to push democratic states towards the (10, 10) outcome. However, an examination of a mixed dyadic relationship returns less than optimal outcomes for enhanced stability.

While similar to the above scenario, in that neither state can be exactly sure of the inclinations of the rival, the recognized character norms of each exert a bias into the decision making process. Non-aggression by the non-democracy is mostly “risk-free.” However, aggression by the democracy is quickly seen as the only option not laden with risk. The diagrams below illustrate the dynamic.

Like the non-democratic state (A), the democratic state (B) has two choices: aggression or non-aggression. Due to their relative transparency, their consensus-driven slowness to mobilize, and their expected inclination toward nonviolent conflict resolution, democratic states are perceived to have a proclivity towards non-aggression. Thus in the revised stag hunt matrix below, State A (non-democratic) would reasonably expect the actions of State B (democratic) to incline towards non-aggression (circled). This assumption provides State A minimal risk in non-aggression for by remaining non-aggressive it achieves the highest possible outcome (10). In fact, acting aggressively returns a lower outcome (8).

		State B (democracy)	
		non-aggression	aggression
State A (non-democracy)	non-aggression	10,10	0,8
	aggression	8,0	7,7

Figure 2. Modified stag hunt (democratic bias)

However, as Rosato noted, “non-democracies are neither trusted nor respected. They are not respected because their domestic systems are considered unjust, and they are not trusted because neither do they respect the freedom of self-governing individuals, *nor are they socialized to resolve conflicts non-violently.*”<sup>164</sup> Thus State B (democratic) would reasonably expect State A (non-democratic) to incline towards aggression (circled). This assumption leaves State B with an unacceptable risk from non-aggression which would deliver the worst possible outcome (0). However, aggression would minimize the risk by resulting in a less than optimum but acceptable result (7).

		State B (democracy)	
		non-aggression	aggression
State A (non-democracy)	non-aggression	10,10	0,8
	aggression	8,0	7,7

Figure 3. Modified stag hunt (non-democratic bias)

<sup>164</sup> Rosato, p. 586; italics added.

In summary, in this modified “stag hunt” dynamic, the perceived democratic norms of State B have allowed State A to presume minimal risk through inaction. However, the perceived non-democratic norms of State A have made the risk to State B too high for non-aggression. This illustration provides some indication for why, when in a mixed dyad relationship, democratic societies may have to defend themselves or even “launch preemptive strikes.”<sup>165</sup>

This illustration of the effect of bias might shed some light on one of the underlying influences behind the 1981 attack by Israeli aircraft on the Iraqi Nuclear Materials Testing Reactor (Osirak) at the Al Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Center, southeast of Baghdad. While Iraq would have likely been unconcerned about unprovoked Israeli aggression, owing to Israel’s democratic regime, for Israel, inaction in the face of potential nuclear arms development and utilization incurred far too high a risk to accept.

Ultimately, the above illustration should provide some degree of skepticism as to the overall positive effect of establishing democratic states in a context with non-democratic states. At a minimum one might expect such an action could have unpredictable results. However, in some circumstances, this mixed dyad relationship might actually increase the potential for hostility. Though the ideal effects of global democratization are desirable in the long term, this potentially destabilizing dyadic relationship might ultimately undercut the fulfillment of the intended “league of peace.” Gleditsch, Christiansen and Hegre concluded, “The idea of remaking the Middle East into a haven of democracy may be laudable, but a piecemeal strategy does not seem to have much chance of success.”<sup>166</sup> Additionally, while a full scale simultaneous conversion of all states in the region to democratic governance might create the desired zone of democratic peace, “Invading all of the autocratic countries in the region over a short period, does not seem very realistic either. It would rob the West of most of its allies in the region and would inevitably lead to an imperial overstretch.”<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Rosato, p. 586.

<sup>166</sup> Gleditsch, Christiansen, Hegre, p. 34.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

In summary, while growing acceptance of democratic peace theory might provide an explanation for President Bush's assertion that "democracies don't war,"<sup>168</sup> various new analyses of causative factors suggest that peace may not be the inevitable outcome of democratization. In relation to the qualifying precepts necessary for theoretical validation, democratic peace theory shows significant limitations which must be recognized as potential shortcomings in its overall cogency. These limitations represent grave practical obstacles to the success of the current U.S. democratization strategy. Additionally, even if it could ultimately be concluded that democratic governance can ensure peace, the pursuit of such governance is laden with destabilizing effects which might – at least in some cases – compromise the achievement of the strategy's ultimate goal and place American security at risk by promoting regional instability.

## **B. EFFECTS OF DEMOCRATIZATION STRATEGY**

Amartya Sen, winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for Economics, wrote, "Throughout the nineteenth century, theorists of democracy found it quite natural to discuss whether one country or another was 'fit for democracy.' This thinking changed only in the twentieth century, with the recognition that the question itself was wrong: A country does not have to be deemed fit *for* democracy; rather, it has to become fit *through* democracy."<sup>169</sup> While Sen may indeed be correct, the challenges of making a country "fit through democracy" have become increasingly significant obstacles to the success of U.S. strategy. In fact, the success of the strategy has become dependent in part upon the domestic impact of democracy itself. Liberal polities have clearly generated significant improvements in living standards and freedom in the West. However, democratic liberty, particularly when implemented through military intervention, has presented significant hindrances to peace.

Much of the success of the current U.S. democratization strategy depends not on the initial destruction of oppressive or threatening regimes but instead on the design of an

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<sup>168</sup> President George W. Bush, Press Conference of the President, 21 March 2006 available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060321-4.html> (accessed on 6 February 2008).

<sup>169</sup> Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value," in *The Global Divergence of Democracies*, ed. Larry Diamond and Mark Platter (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 3.

effective exit strategy which will leave behind a peaceful and functioning regime. In order to maintain indispensable international support, each operation will demand the successful establishment of stable governance in countries where the state, including whatever minimal support structure it provided, has been completely destroyed. In fact, it is reasonable to assume as well that continued international support for U.S. military operations abroad, particularly when effecting a regime change, will be directly proportional to the level of post-conflict democracy, stability and prosperity resulting from each operation. In other words, the current democratization strategy has not only committed America to potential action against a range of non-democratic regimes but also to the requisite peacebuilding operations required in the wake of such action. For this reason, the definition of "mission accomplished" has been extended to the post-conflict reconstruction phase and due recognition has been given to the potential challenges that are inherent in the establishment of liberal governance in post-conflict areas.

Evidence of this broadened U.S. commitment can be seen in recent White House, Department of State and Department of Defense directives. In November 2005, the U.S. Department of Defense issued a directive defining stability operations as "a core U.S. military mission" with "priority comparable to combat operations." According to the directive, "stabilization, security, reconstruction and transition operations" should "lead to sustainable peace. . . The long-term goal is to help develop indigenous capacity for securing essential services, a viable market economy, rule of law, democratic institutions, and a robust civil society."<sup>170</sup> In December 2005, the White House announced a Presidential Directive to improve the management of U.S. efforts in this regard. These initiatives were echoed in the 2006 National Security Strategy which highlighted this initiative and stated that the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization under the Secretary of State draws on all relevant U.S. government agencies and integrates its work with that of the U.S. military.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Department of Defense Directive 3000.05, 28 November 2005, Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations, par. 3.2, 4.1, 4.2.

<sup>171</sup> The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (Washington, DC: The White House, March 2006), p. 16.



Perhaps the clearest indication of this newly defined post-conflict obligation can be seen in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review:

Assistance [including post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction] in today's environment relies on the ability to improve states' governance, administration, internal security and the rule of law in order to build partner governments' legitimacy in the eyes of their own people and thereby inoculate societies against terrorism, insurgency and non-state threats. In partnership with the State Department and others, the [Defense] Department must become as adept at working with foreign constabularies as it is with externally-focused armed forces, and as adept at working with interior ministries as it is with defense ministries — a substantial shift of emphasis that demands broader and more flexible legal authorities and cooperative mechanisms.<sup>172</sup>

However, the paradigm of democratization through which the United States is seeking to achieve this post-conflict transformation may be precisely one of the forces creating vulnerability and instability.

### **C. INSTABILITY THROUGH DEMOCRATIZATION**

In the 2002 National Security Strategy, President Bush assured the world that “America will encourage the advancement of democracy and economic openness...because these are the best foundations for domestic stability and international order.”<sup>173</sup> This goal may show promise in cases in which authoritarian regimes seek to reap the benefits of the global market. However, war-torn states such as Iraq and Afghanistan have thus far encountered great difficulties in coping with the rapid injection of political and market competition.

Roland Paris notes that most modern peacebuilding operations center around “[a] single paradigm – liberal internationalism.”<sup>174</sup> This paradigm assumes that the surest foundation for peace both within and between states is market democracy, that is, “a

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<sup>172</sup> *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 6 February 2006), p. 90.

<sup>173</sup> Bush, *National Security Strategy*.

<sup>174</sup> Roland Paris, “Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism” *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Autumn 1997), p. 56.

liberal democratic polity and a market-oriented economy.”<sup>175</sup> However, in his article Paris highlighted the unsuitability of both in areas still reeling from conflict. He contended that there are “inherently destabilizing side effects [associated with] ... this remedy”<sup>176</sup> in view of the lack of success to date in seven of eight recent international peacebuilding operations around the world. The implications of his conclusions for U.S. democratization strategy seem clear.

Rightly illuminating the cause of incongruence, Paris stated, “both democracy and capitalism encourage conflict and competition – indeed, they thrive on it.”<sup>177</sup> He noted that “[w]ar-shattered states are typically ill equipped to manage societal competition induced by political and economic liberalization, not only because these states have a recent history of violence, but because they typically lack the institutional structures capable of peacefully resolving internal disputes. In these circumstances, efforts to transform war-shattered states into market democracies can serve to exacerbate rather than moderate societal conflicts.”<sup>178</sup> Citing eight major peacebuilding operations on five continents, Paris noted that only one of those eight, Namibia, might be considered a success. All other attempts he highlighted – Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Rwanda – were doomed by the “liberal internationalist paradigm of peacebuilding” which has “exacerbated social tensions and thus contributed to the continuation or renewal of instability.”<sup>179</sup> More specifically, he argues that, among other factors, the process of political liberalization has “generated destabilizing and unforeseen side effects that have impeded the consolidation of stable peace.”<sup>180</sup> This persistent source of instability and its resulting undesired side effects constitute additional obstacles to the success of the current U.S. democratization strategy in the Middle East.

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<sup>175</sup> Paris, “Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism,” p. 56.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

#### D. POLITICAL FRAILITY

It has been said that a healthy democracy thrives on energetic political discourse. It requires “a politically active and involved citizenry...to counterbalance and scrutinize the power of the state and to provide channels for political expression.”<sup>181</sup> This “involved citizenry” is characterized by civic institutions, organizations and associations which serve the purpose of “catalyzing competing societal interests.”<sup>182</sup> In the end, it is this public debate which, Paris noted, “feeds into the policymaking process, which in principle permits democratic governments to devise policies and practices that reflect shifting public attitudes.” In essence, “democracy paradoxically encourages the public expression of conflicting interests in order to limit the intensity of such conflicts by channeling them through peaceful political institutions before they turn violent.”<sup>183</sup> Problems arise, however, when, as author Robert Dahl notes, “citizen associations foster parochial exclusiveness among their members at the expense of concerns for the broader public good.”<sup>184</sup> Indeed, this may be exactly the dilemma faced today in Iraq and that which will continue to burden the effort to democratize the Middle East.

Brian Whitaker, the Middle East editor of the *Guardian*, has argued<sup>185</sup> that the difficulties of the establishment of democracy in the Middle East partly stem from the imperial legacy in the region and the resulting existence of significant minorities within individual Middle Eastern states. While stark differences have often been suppressed in the cause of national unity, this apparent unity merely obscured the fact that a minority elite controlled the country. Thus, when democracy is hastily implemented, political affiliations are most often linked with ethnic or religious divisions rather than with public policy issues. This phenomenon intensely polarizes the population into starkly separated and often rival communities and thus undermines stability efforts. National public

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<sup>181</sup> Paris, p. 74.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., pp. 74-75.

<sup>184</sup> Dahl paraphrased in Paris, p. 75.

<sup>185</sup> Brian Whitaker, “All Together Now,” *The Guardian*, 29 March 2004, accessed at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/mar/29/worlddispatch.brianwhitaker> (accessed 15 March 2008).

concerns are subordinated to ethnic or sectarian competition. The December 2005 legislative elections in Iraq illustrate this point clearly.

Shia Iraqis make up about 60% of the Iraqi population, and the Shia coalition therefore won the election. However, while this outcome might have been expected, the more pertinent observation concerns the almost total lack of cross-ethnic and cross-sectarian voting. Shia candidates won almost no votes in either the Kurdish or Sunni constituencies, which roughly divide the remaining population equally. Conversely, the Kurdish and Sunni parties garnered no support outside their respective communities. The U.S. ambassador in Baghdad, Zilmay Khalilzad, concluded that “people have preferred to vote for their ethnic or sectarian identities, *but for Iraq to succeed there has to be cross-ethnic and cross-sectarian co-operation.*”<sup>186</sup> The invasion eliminated Saddam Hussein’s authoritarian regime but, as Mitchell Cohen, Professor of nineteenth and twentieth century political theory and contemporary European and Middle Eastern politics at Columbia University, noted, the U.S. “anti-totalitarianism approach assumed Iraqi Jeffersonians would emerge from the big bang. Instead, Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds were there.”<sup>187</sup>

The existence of such a starkly polarized populace naturally raises concerns about the emergence of factions which appeal to groups of unified identity that maintain a growing sense of political disenfranchisement and increasingly consolidate around ethnic, religious, or tribal associations. Indeed, ever increasing anti-Americanism in the region has made it not only possible but probable that anti-Western Islamic parties will actually gain power through open and free elections. Here the words of James Madison are uncomfortably apropos.

Complaints are everywhere heard from our most considerate and virtuous citizens, equally the friends of public and private faith, and of public and personal liberty, that our governments are too unstable, that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are

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<sup>186</sup> Remarks of Zilmay Khalilzad available at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/4555182.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4555182.stm); italics added.

<sup>187</sup> “Mitchell Cohen Response,” *Dissent*, Spring 2007, available at <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=775>, p. 4, (accessed 10 February 2008).

too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority.<sup>188</sup>

Over two hundred years later similar complaints can be heard regarding the viability of democracy in the Middle East. However, it might be difficult to replicate America's lasting success in Middle Eastern conditions. In 2003, a classified State Department report stated that "Electoral democracy, were it to emerge, could well be subject to exploitation by anti-American elements."<sup>189</sup> Indeed, victories by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Palestine serve as striking examples of this negative effect and constitute yet another obstacle to the success of the U.S. strategy. In 2006, Michael Ledeen, resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, wrote, "In the abstract, it's hard to imagine a representative government in Iraq without what we call fundamentalists in it. They are part of the population. They will participate."<sup>190</sup> Moqtada al-Sadr's newly acquired control of a significant bloc within the Iraqi parliament seems to have vindicated his disheartening prediction.

Lastly, if the administration's pre-invasion rhetoric is rightly understood, WMD-armed terrorists could commit acts of violence even greater than those already committed on American soil. As Walter McDougall points out, however, "Western Europe was the Number One haven for terrorists outside Afghanistan."<sup>191</sup> Thus, it was precisely the freedoms of the West which the perpetrators of the attacks of 11 September 2001 were able to exploit to their malevolent advantage. As recent investigations into the madrassas and mosques of London have confirmed, free societies may offer a venue for exploitation by radical fundamentalist organizations.

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<sup>188</sup> James Madison, "The Federalist No. 10: The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection (continued)," *Daily Advertiser*, 22 November 1787, accessed at <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm> (accessed 15 August 2008).

<sup>189</sup> Greg Miller, "Democracy in Iraq doubtful, State Dept. report says: Social, economic obstacles work against transformation," *Los Angeles Times*, 14 March 2003.

<sup>190</sup> Ledeen cited in Brian McGuire, "Bush Doctrine Needs Fixing Critics Say," 17 January 2006, accessed at <http://www.nysun.com/national/bush-doctrine-needs-fixing-critics-say/25961/> (accessed on 18 January 2008).

<sup>191</sup> Walter A. McDougall, "Will Europe Survive the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?" Foreign Policy Research Institute, July 2007, p. 20, electronic version available at <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200707.mcdougall.willeuropesurvive.html> (accessed on 10 April 2008).

## E. IDEOLOGICAL CONGRUENCE AND THE TRANSFER OF LIBERAL SOCIETAL NORMS

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the success of U.S. democratization strategy is largely reliant upon the feasibility of the successful alignment of Western, liberal values with the ideological proclivities of each targeted society. Specifically, as current actions in Iraq and Afghanistan represent the most prominent efforts of the ongoing U.S. democratization strategy, ideological congruence will have to be established between Western democratic norms and those of the culture and religion of Islam. While “President Bush believes that democracy and Islam can coexist,”<sup>192</sup> significant opinions exist on either side of the argument. Unfortunately, the bleak track record of successful democratization in predominantly Muslim societies provides no source for optimism. In 1999, a study by Arend Lijphart concluded that a total of 36 countries could be considered stable democracies over the previous 20 years. Of those thirty-six, “none has an Islamic majority.”<sup>193</sup>

Much of the lack of ideological alignment thus far in Iraq can be blamed on the perceived shallowness of the West’s message. American efforts in the “battle for the hearts and minds” in the Middle East have relied upon the appeal of the spoils of liberty instead of focusing on its acknowledgement of mankind’s inalienable rights recognized over two centuries ago as being “endowed by their creator.”<sup>194</sup> Indeed, it is the Western philosophical understanding of the “sanctity of the individual and the inviolability of conscience”<sup>195</sup> which has given birth to freedom and democracy. However, the emphasis on issues such as universal suffrage and economic freedom without a recognition and appreciation for the deeply rooted philosophical convictions behind such

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<sup>192</sup> Fact Sheet: President Bush calls for a “Forward Strategy of Freedom” to Promote Democracy in the Middle East, 6 November 2003, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-11.html> (accessed on 18 April 2008).

<sup>193</sup> Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); cited in William J. Crotty, *Democratic Development and Political Terrorism* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2005), p. 93; italics added.

<sup>194</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *The Essential Thomas Jefferson*, ed. By John Gabriel Hunt (New Jersey, Portland House, 1994), p. 24.

<sup>195</sup> Robert R. Reilly, “Winning the War of Ideas,” *Claremont Review of Books*, Summer 2007, p. 36.

ideas has rendered the West's message a shallow call to materialism and self-indulgence. Robert Reilly, a former director of the Voice of America, explained the effect. "The mantra of freedom — unconnected to any higher purpose — translates as a form of materialism."<sup>196</sup>

He points out that the intellectual argument has thus been reduced to a choice: "greater freedom with no purpose or personal submission to a higher purpose."<sup>197</sup> It is becoming more and more evident that many Muslims, even those of relative affluence, have opted for the latter. Instead of providing a transcendent alternative, America is allowing the target population to conclude that the West is "indifferent to various claims to truth."<sup>198</sup>

The Allied message against National Socialism during World War II, the same message which was later turned successfully against communism, had a clear and distinct advantage in that war of ideas. Hitler's and Stalin's messages were empty, void of any underlying theological meaning or appreciation for God-given inalienable rights. Unfortunately, because of American reluctance to fight a war of theological ideas in the Middle East (let alone to continue to recognize them at home), the democratization strategy has been reduced, according to Professor Harry V. Jaffa, to "telling others to accept the forms of our own political institutions, without reference to the principles or convictions that give rise to those institutions."<sup>199</sup>

Skepticism about the true prospects of successful democratization in the Middle East has been deplored by President Bush as "cultural condescension."<sup>200</sup> However, the

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<sup>196</sup> Robert R. Reilly, "The Roots of Terrorism and the Source of Freedom," 22 April 08, [http://insidecatholic.com/Joomla/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=3460&Itemid=100](http://insidecatholic.com/Joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3460&Itemid=100) (accessed on 16 May 2008).

<sup>197</sup> Robert R. Reilly, "Winning the War of Ideas," *Claremont Review of Books*, Summer 2007, p. 36.

<sup>198</sup> Robert R. Reilly, "Losing the War of Ideas," 4 December 2007, [http://www.claremont.org/publications/pubid.741/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.claremont.org/publications/pubid.741/pub_detail.asp) (accessed on 16 May 2008).

<sup>199</sup> Harry V. Jaffa, "The Central Idea: In Iraq as in America, there's more to democracy than majority rule," *Wall Street Journal*, 1 March 2006, <http://www.opinionjournal.com/federation/feature/?id=110008028> (accessed on 16 May 2008).

<sup>200</sup> Speech by President Bush at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy, "President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and in the Middle East," 6 November 2003 available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html> (accessed on 20 March 2008).

lack of appreciation for cultural and historical anomalies could lead to grave miscalculations regarding the expected outcomes of future U.S. interventions. While a theological analysis of the tenets of the Islamic faith is clearly outside the purview of this thesis, the relative dearth of democratic governance in Islamic countries provides strong evidence of an inherent cultural aversion to Western-style liberalism. Abdou Filali-Ansary, director of the King Abdul-Aziz al-Saoud Foundation for Islamic Studies and Human Sciences, believes that this aversion finds its roots not within the theological heritage of the Islamic faith, but instead in the effects of the “nineteenth century encounter of Muslims with the modernizing West.”<sup>201</sup>

Filali-Ansary contended that the Muslim aversion to secularism derives from a “tenacious misunderstanding” born of linguistic confusion which blurred the difference between “secularists” (or “temporalists”<sup>202</sup>) and “atheists.” He concluded that an inaccurate and unfortunate choice of terminology “implicitly equated these nineteenth-century positivists with the seventh-century opponents of the Prophet [Mohammed].” It is this unfortunate formulation which has “defined the terms of a large and enduring misunderstanding” in which “secularism was seen as being intimately related to, if not simply the same thing as, atheism.” A resulting bipolar opposition has, since then, been deeply entrenched in Muslim societies. According to Filali-Ansary,

The feeling that has prevailed since then among Muslims is that there is a strict and irreducible opposition between two systems – Islam and non-Islam. To be a secularist has meant to abandon Islam, to reject altogether not only the religious faith but also its attendant morality and the traditions and rules that operate within Muslim societies. It therefore has been understood as a total alienation from the constituent elements of the Islamic personality and as a complete surrender to unbelief, immorality, and self-hatred, leading to a disavowal of the historic identity and civilization inherited from illustrious ancestors.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Abdou Filali-Ansary, “Muslims and Democracy” cited in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, *The Global Divergence of Democracies* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 37.

<sup>202</sup> An essay written by Jamal-Eddin Al-Afghani (1838-97) in reply to Ernest Renan was entitled “Ar-Rad ‘ala Dahriyin” (“The Answer to Temporalists”). The term “Dahriyin” was used in reference to “temporalists” but was of Qur’anic origin and normally referred to “atheists.” Filali-Ansary, p. 38.

<sup>203</sup> Filali-Ansary, pp. 38-39.



Thus, in contrast with the Western world, of which it could be said that a distinction came to exist between “Christianity” – the religion of the followers of Christ and his teachings – and “Christendom” – the territory, culture and society in which the Christian faith predominated, the term “Islam” has become all encompassing. Indeed, as Filali-Ansary, pointed out, “The same word was, and still is, used to refer to both a set of beliefs and rituals and to the life of the community of believers through time and space.”<sup>204</sup> This predisposition presents the most significant obstacle to the acceptance of liberal democratic ideals in Muslim societies. The absence of what Filali-Ansary conceptualized as “Islamdom” has overshadowed the overriding perception of societal order. Because, Muslims in Islamic societies neither acknowledge nor in fact even recognize any difference between religion and society within their own culture, they reject Western political liberalism as a highway to cultural decadence. Thus, it might be said that for Muslims, the principles of the “Rights of Man” not only laid the groundwork for liberty but also for licentiousness. In essence, in the minds of members of fundamentalist Islamic societies, the pen of Thomas Paine is irrevocably wedded to the camera of Robert Mapplethorpe, whose work would be regarded as an abomination by pious Muslims. As a result Western-style political ideology is perceived as a “Trojan horse” for moral decline.<sup>205</sup>

In the words of Dinesh D’Souza, “What angers religious Muslims is not the American Constitution but the scandalous sexual mores they see on television.”<sup>206</sup> In this regard, another challenge to the U.S. democratization strategy may reside in the successful “de-secularizing” of liberal governance. In other words, Islamic acceptance of democratic institutions may depend on the possibility of separating Western cultural norms from Western ideas on social order. Even if this could be done, however, peaceful

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<sup>204</sup> Filali-Ansary, p. 41.

<sup>205</sup> An example of this enjoined relationship between religion and society within the Islamic perception can be seen in the response of many Muslims to the caricatures of Muhammad printed in the Danish newspaper, Jyllands-Posten. The caricatures were not seen as an expression of free speech but instead as an affront to the religion of Islam. While protests against the newspaper did occur, there were violent attacks against the Danish embassies in Beirut and Damascus. Such attacks reflect the Islamic understanding of the nature of society. The Danish government was seen not as protecting the rights of free speech but as defending blasphemy.

<sup>206</sup> Dinesh D’Souza, *The Enemy at Home* (New York: Double Day, 2007), p. 16.

coexistence between Islamic democracies (or what Filali-Ansary proposed as “guided” democracies) or between Western and Islamic democracies is untested and in no way guaranteed.

An additional source of Western and Middle Eastern ideological divergence which provides significant obstacles to U.S. democratization efforts can be found much earlier than the “nineteenth-century encounter of Muslims with the modernizing West.”<sup>207</sup> The lasting impact of two significant cultural events in Western history, the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution, must not be overlooked. Hagen Schulz rightly acknowledged the epochal significance of the West’s transition to secularized rule beginning with the Protestant Reformation. “The background to this radical change was a break in historical continuity comparable only to that radical transformation that had once turned bands of Neolithic hunters and food-gathers into organized communities of arable farmers, stock breeders and town dwellers.”<sup>208</sup> An analogous transition never occurred in Islamic society.<sup>209</sup>

However, the magnitude of the change represented by the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution should not be ignored for it was as much a colossal shift in power and influence as it was a radical transformation of the ideological world view of Western civilization down to the present day. Notably, it is this transition to a new *Weltanschauung* which most closely embodies the ultimate goal of the current

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<sup>207</sup> Filali-Ansary, “Muslims and Democracy,” p. 37.

<sup>208</sup> Hagen Schulze, “States, Nations and Nationalism: From the Middle Ages to the Present,” p.136.

<sup>209</sup> Like the West, the Islamic world had agents of societal and intellectual change. In fact, over four centuries before the European Enlightenment, Muslim “free thinkers” were putting forth liberal ideas about the nature of religion and faith in society. Though similar in their intellectual assent to reason over revelation, the ideas of men such as Ibn Rushd (known by the name “Averroes” in the West), Ibn al-Rawandi, and Abu Bakr al-Razi were subsequently stifled by forces of rigid orthodoxy. Iqbal Latif notes that “It was Baghdad’s ‘House of Wisdom’ that bequeathed the Latin version of Aristotle and Plato’s thinking to the Western world; Islamic scholars translated their work from Greek to Arabic and the West got to see those works after they were translated from Arabic to Latin. Cordoba was the seat of learning in the times when west [sic] did not know what renaissance was. Islamic renaissance started 400 years ahead of the Western renaissance. It was a tragedy of the greatest magnitude that Islamic renaissance lost its steam once the clergy branded most of the Muslim scholars as heretics.” This intellectual suppression helped to foster an unbroken line of conservative Islamic orthodoxy that has often been hostile to Western secularized ideas. Citation from Iqbal Latif, “Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan - A sad ordeal,” *Global Politician*, 3 September 2008, accessed at <http://www.globalpolitician.com/24250-iraq-pakistan-afghanistan> (accessed on 6 September 2008).

U.S. democratization strategy. As Roland Paris notes, “Peacebuilding is in effect an enormous experiment in social engineering – an experiment that involves transplanting Western models of social, political, and economic organization into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict: in other words, pacification through political and economic liberalization.”<sup>210</sup> The ongoing friction faced today in Iraq and Afghanistan illuminates foreboding obstacles which are likely to persist in efforts to democratize the Middle East. Unfortunately, the essential “social engineering,” that at the level of values, seems most often overlooked – trumped by expectations that an effective transition to Western-style political and economic modernization can be accomplished through the adoption of procedural forms, such as elections and universal suffrage.

In Western societies, however, the ideological changes of the Reformation and the wars of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries laid the philosophical ground work for the political, social and economic changes which followed. Thus the challenge to U.S. (and NATO) democratization efforts is the successful accomplishment of an analogous – and no less momentous – transition in Islamic societies through the surgical transplant of Western-style politics and economics. As the centuries-long democratization process of Western societies suggests, such a transition will necessitate a significant marginalization of the prevailing religion and culture, and will probably require continued engagement of military personnel from the United States and coalition members.

There are two sources from which such an ideological transition could emerge to enable the democratic transition of future states within the region. First, as was the case with the influential seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophers of Europe, this change could be fostered internally through the free expression of convincing liberal ideas. Secondly, this change could be forced upon a society by a powerful external source, such as the United States, which effectively destroys or significantly marginalizes the previously dominant ideology. It seems quite clear, however, that at this time neither option is reasonably available to the United States and its coalition partners with regard to the Middle East.

Effective totalitarian regimes are able to greatly restrict free expression and thus any internal dissent is quickly and firmly quashed. Reuel Marc Gerecht, writing in the

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<sup>210</sup> Paris, p. 56.

*New York Times*, praised the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani as a reasonable cleric, who is “far and away the most respected person in Iraq” and “who is known for his strong aversion to mixing politics and faith.”<sup>211</sup> Yet it is reported that the ayatollah’s website portrayed a far less tolerant disposition. “The ruling upon them [that slander Islam]” he stated, “is death”.<sup>212</sup> Such characteristic intolerance provides little hope that effective ideological change might come from within oppressive Islamic regimes.

Externally induced ideological change has, however, been the hopeful mechanism of the current U.S.- and/or NATO-led efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, in the oft-cited democratic transitions of both Japan and Germany, President Bush invokes precisely the sort of ideological shift that is expected in Iraq and Afghanistan. Certainly, the President’s historical assertion is correct, and healthy democracies in Japan and Germany are a vindication of those who believed in the democratic potential of these nations. Yet this assertion fails to take into account the amount of material and human destruction which was required to render receptive the ideological palates of German and Japanese citizens. Both societies had to be essentially reduced to rubble to achieve their capitulation. The establishment of democratic rule required considerable supervision and effort. Such a commitment of blood and treasure by the United States and coalition partners appears implausible in the foreseeable future. This reticence might actually provide another obstacle to the fulfillment of the strategy – that is, the maintenance of lasting public support at home while trying to forcibly impose this significant level of ideological change. In the end, it may be this challenge which proves the most formidable obstacle to the success of U.S. democratization strategy.

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<sup>211</sup> Reuel Marc Gerecht, “The Sabotage of Democracy,” *New York Times*, 14 November 2003, accessed at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9407EFD61438F937A25752C1A9659C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all> (accessed on 8 August 2008).

<sup>212</sup> Quoted in Jeremy Grant, “Learn from the Fall of Ancient Rome, Official Warns US,” *Financial Times*, 14 August 2007, p.2.

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## V. CONCLUSION

Immanuel Kant enthusiastically supported the American cause in the war of independence against Great Britain. As “a republican and a humanitarian,” Kant was entirely devoted to the idea of the universal rights of mankind and understood war to be “the supreme obstacle to be overcome on the hard road toward securing these rights.”<sup>213</sup> His vision in *Perpetual Peace* provided a remedy. Republicanism was for Kant both the means by which to secure these universal rights as well as the final solution to rid the world of the scourge of war, which was attributed to the dynastic and autocratic political structure of the European continent. Yet to depict Kant as an idealistic pacifist would be a gross mischaracterization. The German philosopher had, in fact, welcomed the Revolution in France and remained fervently supportive, despite the tyranny of the Jacobin Reign of Terror. For Kant, it seemed, the ends – that is, securing mankind’s immutable rights – justified whatever blood stained means were necessary to bring about such a transition. In the end the happiness of all of humanity depended upon it.

### A. THE TEMPERING OF LIBERAL IDEALISM IN AMERICA’S FOUNDING IDEOLOGY

This same uncompromising spirit can be heard in the writings and speeches of some of America’s most famous founding fathers. Political freedom was a nonnegotiable right for men such as Patrick Henry, who declared , “give me liberty, or give me death!”<sup>214</sup> Yet, while sacrificing for the freedom of one’s countrymen is a noble and often unavoidable duty, Kant’s vision was far broader than Henry’s personalized evocation. Kant’s vision was closer to that of Thomas Jefferson, who held in the U.S. Declaration of Independence that liberty was not merely an American privilege, but owed to *all men*, who had been created equal and “endowed by their creator with [inherent and]

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<sup>213</sup> Lewis White Beck, “Introduction,” in Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1957), p. viii.

<sup>214</sup> Patrick Henry, Speech given at St. John’s Church in Richmond, Virginia, to the Virginia House of Burgesses on 23 March 1775. Cited in William Wirt, *Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry* (Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), p. 94.

certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”<sup>215</sup> Since the establishment of the United States, much of the challenging duality of American foreign policy has derived from the effort to reconcile two often competing intentions: the necessity to defend the freedoms of Americans and the perceived obligation to extend those freedoms to others. The latter has not always been in America’s immediate security interests.

Indeed, less than fifty years after its establishment in Independence Hall, the United States would be forced to choose between its immediate security interests and its dedication to avowed principles of liberty. Through his authorship of the Monroe Doctrine, John Quincy Adams realigned American interests away from Kantian idealism towards a foreign policy devoted primarily to protecting American interests in the Western Hemisphere. While an alliance with other fledgling constitutional governments would have been consistent with an ideological endorsement of the liberal ideals of the dawning age, it might well have cost the United States prestige, safety and autonomy. Adams chose restraint in the defense of American ideals and arguably changed the course of history. By checking the American predilection towards Kantian idealism, he initiated almost a century of realist-inspired foreign policy and put America’s status as a rising world power on a firm foundation.

## **B. WILSON’S SOLUTION**

The end of the nineteenth century brought rapid and dramatic change. Like the complementary gale force winds of a perfect storm, the increased lethality of the state was united with another powerful force of social identity, nationalism. Coalescing around basic associations such as language and history, this powerful ideological stimulus turned Europe into “the scene of some of the most savage episodes of collective

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<sup>215</sup> Thomas Jefferson, “The Declaration of Independence,” in *The Essential Thomas Jefferson*, ed. by John Gabriel Hunt (New Jersey, Portland House, 1994), p. 24. In his original draft Thomas Jefferson had identified man’s rights as not merely “inalienable” but “inherent.” Congress replaced the words “inherent and” with the word “certain.” While the rewording stands as the official text of the declaration, Jefferson’s original wording provides insight into his perception of the intrinsic nature of the rights recognized by the American revolutionaries.

violence in the recorded history of the human species.”<sup>216</sup> Nationalist fervor not only sacrificed a generation of young men in many countries but accounted for shameful instances of cruelty against humanity in much of Europe. President Woodrow Wilson identified the root cause of this tragedy in national political systems and found a remedy in Kantian idealism. Democracy, Wilson was convinced, would overcome such malevolent discord and create a lasting “League of Peace” to prevent any repetition of the deplorable losses the world had just witnessed.

U.S. forces joined the war effort in part “to make the world safe for democracy,” yet Wilson’s vision suffered its most stinging defeat at home. Taking a position comparable that of John Quincy Adams a century before, Henry Cabot Lodge and other opponents of the League of Nations rejected the subordination of American interests to ideological commitments abroad and in the end, defeated the rising Kantian idealism of Wilson’s proposed League of Nations. “The United States is the world’s best hope,” Lodge said, “but if you fetter her in the interests and quarrels of other nations, if you tangle her in the intrigues of Europe, you will destroy her powerful good, and endanger her very existence. Leave her to march freely through the centuries to come, as in the years that have gone. Strong, generous, and confident, she has nobly served mankind. Beware how you trifle with your marvelous inheritance; this great land of ordered liberty. For if we stumble and fall, freedom and civilization everywhere will go down in ruin.”<sup>217</sup>

Though President Wilson did not live to see the fulfillment of his vision, his idealism rose again in the shadow of the Second World War and the threat of communism. Indeed, Kantian and Wilsonian ideas echoed loudly in the rhetoric of American foreign policy throughout the Cold War. The United States extolled the fundamental rights of freedom and liberty in the face of Soviet oppression. However, a convenient marriage had been achieved. The spread of communist ideology not only threatened democratic and liberal ideals overseas, but also America itself, owing to

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<sup>216</sup> Bernard Wasserstein, *Barbarism and Civilization* (Oxford, Oxford University Press), p.vii.

<sup>217</sup> Henry Cabot Lodge, “Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Sr. Against the League of Nations,” 12 August 1919, accessed at <http://www2.volstate.edu/socialscience/FinalDocs/WWI-20s/lodgeagainst.htm> (accessed on 15 May 2008).



Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles and other capabilities. American security interests and American ideological commitments were aligned. In effect, realism and idealism dictated the same policy prescriptions. Protecting America's physical security was consistent with promoting its ideology.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, while Kantian and Wilsonian idealism would not completely fade from the agenda, U.S. foreign policy favored realism-inspired pursuits void of any consistent and all-encompassing strategy. The election of George W. Bush seemed to signal a continuation of this new national rhetoric. However, early events in his Presidency had a profound effect on U.S. foreign policy and ushered in a revitalization of Kantian and Wilsonian idealism.

### **C. A KANTIAN AND WILSONIAN RENAISSANCE**

The administration of President George W. Bush has provided a unique opportunity to highlight the impact of global events on the character of U.S. foreign policy and to recognize the continuing influence of Kantian and Wilsonian idealism, which has risen again to prominence in American foreign policy. In 2000 Condoleezza Rice put forth a criticism of America's ongoing lack luster approach to foreign policy which, she contended, had dominated the post-Cold War era. Eight years later, after two terms as an influential member of the George W. Bush administration, she provided a review of the administration's course of action and its current vision for the future of American foreign policy.<sup>218</sup>

Noting the administration's initial commitment to a more realist, America-first disposition, Rice concedes that it undertook a distinct "departure from prior policy,"<sup>219</sup> particularly in the Middle East. Indeed, in the wake of the terror attacks of 11 September 2001, the administration broke from a long standing U.S. strategy which "focused almost exclusively on stability"<sup>220</sup> and became increasingly dominated by idealistic notions of

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<sup>218</sup> Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2008, pp. 2-26.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

“good vs. evil” and promoting regional democratization. The seemingly successful elimination of Afghanistan’s Taliban regime in late 2001 gave ample hope that a wave of democratic transition was underway in areas which had thus far been untouched by liberal governance. In addition, a growing sense of urgency about the potential for Iraq, Iran and North Korea to pass WMD to terrorist organizations pushed the administration ever nearer the option of preemptive strike.

From one perspective it might be argued that the March 2003 invasion of Iraq signified the reunification of America’s security interests and its democratic ideals. Eliminating the regime of Saddam Hussein would remove the threat of WMD production and transfer by that regime, but also spread the freedom and liberty that Americans enjoy to a part of the world which had known only oppression for millennia. The administration therefore, at least in a broad sense, revived a Cold War strategy. However, the dual pillars of American “power and principle”<sup>221</sup> were not used to contain a growing ideology, but as grounds for a preemptive invasion. The failure to find WMD after the invasion of Iraq, however, forced a second decisive shift in the administration’s foreign policy. Without any evidence of a direct threat to U.S. national security in Iraq, America’s declared mission in this country became almost purely an expression of Kantian and Wilsonian idealism. The success of this endeavor is threatened by enormous obstacles which must be addressed.

#### **D. THE DEBATABLE COGENCY OF DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY**

Whether to hasten the immediate success of the U.S. democratization strategy or perhaps to refine its scope, significant obstacles must be first acknowledged and, if possible, overcome. As discussed previously, three major obstacles stand out. First and foremost among these is the debatable cogency of democratic peace theory. On 21 March 2006, President Bush asserted that one of the reasons for America’s invasion of Iraq was to “lay peace” because “history has proven that democracies don't war.”<sup>222</sup> Over

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<sup>221</sup> Rice, p. 3.

<sup>222</sup> President George W. Bush, 21 March 2006, *Press Conference of the President* accessed at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/03/20060321-4.html> (accessed on 8 June 2008).

fifty years of “democratic” peace in Europe have at first glance made this contention difficult to challenge. However, while a correlation between democracy and peace could likely be established, this relationship is, upon closer review, less causal than has been widely assumed. Among other factors, as noted in Chapter IV, overwhelming American political-military influence in regions of assumed “democratic peace” may matter more than the regime type of the states in these regions.

With this in mind, the first obstacle to the fulfillment of U.S. democratization strategy can be identified – that is, democratic peace in the Middle East would likely require at least the same level of U.S. regional hegemony that was necessary for its attainment in Europe. Condoleezza Rice acknowledged this required level of commitment. Referring to the ongoing democratization effort in Afghanistan, she wrote, “We can succeed...but we must be prepared to sustain a partnership with that new democracy for many years to come.”<sup>223</sup> Since the terrorist threat to the United States is hardly equivalent to that once posed by the Soviet Union, and the extensive transnational cultural and familial links such as those which existed between America and Europe after World War II have no equivalent in the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq, domestic support for such an extended effort will be difficult to sustain. Indeed, current U.S. opinion polls show less than robust support for U.S. efforts in the Middle East. In April 2008, Gallup Poll reported that public discontent about the Iraq war reached a new high. Sixty-three percent of Americans surveyed said that sending troops into Iraq was a mistake.<sup>224</sup> More recently, a CNN opinion poll from 28-31 August 2008 indicated that only 35% of the Americans polled continue to support U.S. engagement in the Iraq War.<sup>225</sup> It seems plausible that public support could decline the longer U.S. troops remain in Iraq.

Democratic peace theory also warrants critical scrutiny in light of the requisite conditions for peace. While the theory may be valid for certain liberal established democratic governments, no positive assumptions should be made regarding peaceful

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<sup>223</sup> Rice, p. 11.

<sup>224</sup> Gallup Poll, 24 April 2008, accessed at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/27391/Gallup-Poll-Review-Key-Points-About-Public-Opinion-Iraq.aspx>

<sup>225</sup> CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll. 29-31 August 2008, <http://www.pollingreport.com/iraq.htm> (accessed on 2 September 2008).

interactions among illiberal democratic regimes. If, as President Bush stated, the United States truly has “no intention of determining the precise form of Iraq’s new government,”<sup>226</sup> Washington will have no means by which to ensure the establishment of peace-oriented democratic characteristics. In mid-2008, Rice, however, expressed the administration’s growing recognition of the necessity for far greater American involvement to ensure “positive” political maturity. “The task for us,” she wrote, “is to support and shape these difficult processes of change and to help the nations of the region overcome several major challenges to their emergence as modern democratic states.”<sup>227</sup> This increased U.S. involvement to influence political developments in the various states of the Middle East will, however, probably elicit greater regional animosity, at least in some quarters, regarding perceived American “meddling.”

Lastly, as Rakenrud and Hegre<sup>228</sup> have shown, while the dyadic relationship among co-existing democracies has proven to be highly stable, the least stable relationship is a mixed dyad involving democratic and non-democratic regimes. By extension, to avoid enduring conflict in a region, particularly one in which a liberal democracy is isolated among non-democratic regimes, there exists no alternative but to force the democratization of the surrounding non-democratic regimes. In essence, to actualize the promises of democratic peace theory, it might be logically argued that the United States must commit itself to what would likely be the forceful transformation of all the non-democracies in the region. It is quite possible that the continuing Iranian pursuit of nuclear weapons capability reflects a tacit recognition among Tehran’s political elites of this perceived U.S. objective. Critics might readily conclude that the U.S. democratization effort, at least in Iraq, has had the unintended effect of making Middle Eastern instability significantly more dangerous.

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<sup>226</sup> Speech by President Bush at the American Enterprise Institute, “President Discusses the Future of Iraq,” 26 February 2003, available at [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html), p. 1 (accessed on 17 May 2008).

<sup>227</sup> Rice, p. 14.

<sup>228</sup> Arvid Rakenrud and Havard Hegre, “The Hazard of War: Reassessing the Evidence for the Democratic Peace,” *Journal of Peace Research* 34(4) (1997), pp. 385-404.

## **E. DEMOCRATIC INSTABILITY**

Another obstacle to the successful pursuit of U.S. democratization strategy is the potential for instability, which can result from the conflict and competition inherent in the nature of democracy. As Condoleezza Rice noted, “few nations begin the democratic journey with a democratic culture.”<sup>229</sup> Vigorous debate is often seen as the clearest sign of a healthy democracy. However, Rice observed, states transitioning from highly autocratic rule have “virtually no legitimate channels for political expression”<sup>230</sup> and thus are unable to adequately contain debate and redirect conflicts toward compromise. Without such channels, democracy often becomes fiercely polarizing. Public debate exacerbates deep and hostile divisions along cultural, sectarian or religious dividing lines. The resulting perception of disenfranchisement can serve as a catalyst for violence, particularly regarding issues of religion. It is this “untidiness of democracy” which, Secretary Rice wrote, has led many to doubt the prudence of imposing certain features of a liberal polity in weakened states such as Iraq.<sup>231</sup>

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, religious and sectarian divisions in the Middle East, which had existed for millennia, were arbitrarily overlaid with national identities and borders defined mainly by British and French diplomats. As a result, post-conflict reconciliation in Iraq has faced significant obstacles – including the differences dividing the Sunnis, the Shiites and the Kurds. The establishment of functioning and progressive democracies in the region thus remains a distant goal. Internal differences and deep-rooted cultural outlooks constitute enormous obstacles. As recent elections in Iraq have shown, barring the cultivation of healthy and progressive discourse across religious and sectarian divisions, the political process will remain starkly polarized and thus ineffective in diffusing antagonism. The risk of violence and instability will accordingly persist. The Bush administration has commenced the implementation of its democratization strategy in one of the most fiercely segregated regions of the world. If, as Rice wrote, “Iraq is a microcosm of the region, with its layers of ethnic and sectarian diversity,”<sup>232</sup> the pursuit of the strategy within this region is a challenging objective indeed.

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<sup>229</sup> Rice, p. 10.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>232</sup> Rice, p. 21.

An additional daunting reality is that a liberated, highly devout populace may freely elect parties closely aligned with terrorism and in fact opposed to democracy. According to Rice, “As difficult as this problem is, it cannot be the case that people are denied the right to vote, just because the outcome might be unpleasant to us.”<sup>233</sup> Rice acknowledged such cases as the 2004 election of Hamas in Palestine, but contended that international scrutiny has made it resoundingly clear that “you can be a terrorist group or you can be a political party, but you cannot be both.”<sup>234</sup> Unless the United States is prepared to “undo” such valid elections by force, this character duality is, despite Rice’s assertion, entirely possible. In fact, in regions dominated by radical Islamic fundamentalism, it is extremely probable. In the words of Lord Acton, “The one pervading evil of democracy is the tyranny of the majority, or rather of that party, not always the majority, that succeeds, by force or fraud, in carrying elections.”<sup>235</sup>

## **F. IDEOLOGICAL INCONGRUENCE**

The final and perhaps most significant obstacle facing the Bush administration’s democratization strategy is the overall incongruence of the ideas of Western liberalism and fundamentalist Islamic ideology. The regrettable reality that, five years after the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq, the liberated continue to take up arms against their liberators is an ominous signal of significant ideological discord. Indeed, perhaps the greatest shortcoming of the current strategy has less to do with its misunderstanding of Middle Eastern cultures than with its wanton disregard of the history of Western political culture. Modern liberal governance in the West did not arise in conjunction with the theocratic orientation of medieval Christendom. Instead, through the cataclysmic effects of the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution, conceptions of democratic rights and popular rule gained legitimacy over a period of several centuries. The expectation that a comparable ideological transformation might arise from within oppressive authoritarian religion-centered regimes seems remarkably

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<sup>233</sup> Rice, p. 20.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Lord John Emerich Edward Acton cited in Gary Galles, “Lord Acton on Liberty and Government” 11 May 2002, available at <http://mises.org/story/1086> (accessed on 20 August 2008).

optimistic. Current democratization efforts are an attempt to impose a U.S.-style ideological reorientation on societies which have not experienced pivotal “ripening” events analogous to the Reformation and the Enlightenment. Tom Teepen notes that Americans should look favorably on President Bush “for promoting democracy as a core theme of his presidency,” but points out that he has erred by “failing to heed our own history.”<sup>236</sup> A clearer awareness of the tremendous amount of time required for the democratic transformation in the West would counsel patience and restraint rather than forceful attempts to accelerate political and social change.

Condoleezza Rice wrote, “Democracy, it is said, cannot be imposed, particularly by a foreign power. This is true but beside the point.”<sup>237</sup> In fact, it is *exactly* the point, for it is the very foundation of ongoing U.S. efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. If the forcible imposition of liberalism can be successful only in rare circumstances, as discussed in Chapter IV, the expected Kantian and Wilsonian peace – the desired end-state of the current democratization strategy – may not be readily attained, especially in the adverse conditions of the Middle East. In the meantime, moreover, Americans may be less safe. They may have to either continue to risk the lives of military personnel through a full-blown commitment to an overwhelming and enduring “guiding” presence in the region, or by withdrawal, accept the precarious consequences of significantly more instability in the Middle East.

Noble in its ideals, the current U.S. democratization strategy faces significant obstacles which threaten its success and raise important questions about its overall suitability as the foundation of a national strategy. Like the strategy, the answer can be bifurcated into both realist and idealist concerns. From a realist perspective, significant consideration should be given to the practicality of the objective. Combat with resurgent Taliban forces in Afghanistan will demand increased troop strength, and the fledgling Iraqi democracy will require an ongoing U.S. military presence for years to come.

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<sup>236</sup> Tom Teepen, “Communism over, but Russia is still Russia,” *Monterey County Herald*, 20 August 2008.

<sup>237</sup> Rice, p. 10.

Meanwhile, U.S. support for pockets of democracy in the Caucasus has pitted America against an adversary far more powerful than any it will face in the Middle East, Russia. While the spread of democracy around the world might eventually deliver the peace it has promised, it is becoming more and more evident that the forceful promotion of this transition has jeopardized its fulfillment by overtaxing the political, economic and military solvency of the United States. “The potential for cautious democratic advance,” notes Teepen, “has been set back by democracy recklessly asserted beyond our [America’s] willingness or ability to defend it.”<sup>238</sup>

From a long-term historical perspective, it should be asked whether the aggressive pursuit of a global democratic transition could tarnish what the United States has always considered its sacred birthright, liberty. To ascertain the genuineness of such a risk, one might reconsider what John Quincy Adams, then U.S. Secretary of State, said on the anniversary of the U.S. Declaration of Independence in 1821:

She [America] well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself, beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force. The frontlet upon her brows would no longer beam with the ineffable splendor of freedom and independence; but in its stead would soon be substituted an imperial diadem, flashing in false and tarnished lustre the murky radiance of dominion and power. She might become the dictatress of the world: she would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Tom Teepen, “Communism over, but Russia is still Russia,” *Monterey County Herald*, 20 August 2008.

<sup>239</sup> John Quincy Adams, *An Address Delivered at the request of a Commission of the Citizens of Washington; on the Occasion of Reading the Declaration of Independence, on the Fourth of July, 1821* (Cambridge: University Press/Hillard and Metcalf, 1821), p. 32.



Whether the continued U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere in the Middle East will bring about democratic change remains to be seen. The more important question, however, is determining to what extent and in which circumstances democratization is a legitimate ideological foundation for future U.S. policy. It is safe to say that John Quincy Adams would recommend caution, restraint, and selectivity in pursuing the goal of democratization overseas.

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